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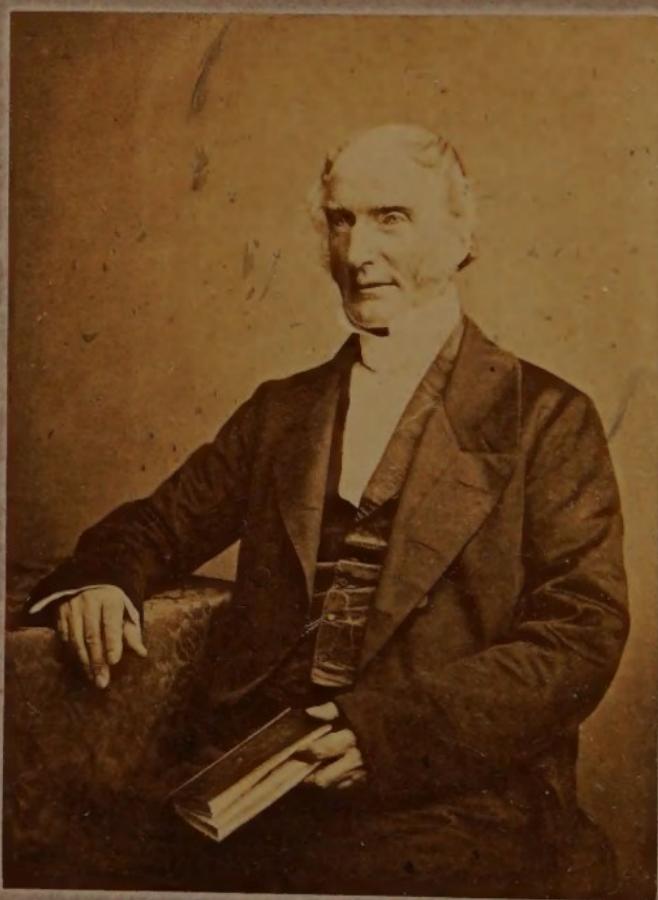
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Memoir and Remains.



G.W. Wilson, Photo, Aberdeen.

David Simpson

Aberdeen, A&R. Milne.

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Memoir and Remains

OF THE

REV. DAVID SIMPSON, A.M.,

MINISTER OF TRINITY FREE CHURCH, ABERDEEN.

BY THE

REV. W. KINNAIRD MITCHELL, A.M.,

Minister of the Free Church, Cluny.

ABERDEEN: A. & R. MILNE;
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO.

1865.

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AT CLAREMONT
California

Arthur King & Company, Printers, Aberdeen.

TO
The Minister and Congregation of Trinity Free Church,
IN TOKEN OF FRIENDLY ESTEEM,
AND IN REMEMBRANCE OF PLEASANT INTERCOURSE,
BY ONE WHO WAS FOR MANY YEARS A HEARER OF THEIR FORMER
PASTOR, AND A MEMBER OF HIS FLOCK.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Memoir of the Rev. DAVID SIMPSON has been executed, in deference to the urgent request of the Office-bearers of Free Trinity Church, that I should prefix a short Biographical Sketch of their late beloved pastor to the contemplated re-issue of his "Addresses to Young Men." It may be necessary to apologise for certain features of it, which are connected with my relationship to the departed. This connexion has been, in some respects, a drawback, since it occasionally prevented me from embracing opportunities for commenting on the facts recorded, which would have been welcomed by another. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that brevity was essential. And as the journal, from which the devotional extracts were taken, was written in a system of short hand known to few, there seemed no alternative. Feeling, however, the delicacy of my attempting a general estimate of the life and character of my uncle, I compiled the

concluding outline from sketches composed by friends of his, which had been previously made public.

The aim steadily kept in view by me, in preparing the volume, has been to produce such a memorial of this worthy and zealous minister, as might help to preserve many of his wholesome and spiritual exhortations in the recollection of those that were privileged statedly to hear him. From the circumstance of Mr. Simpson not commencing a journal till the year 1839, there was difficulty in maintaining a due proportion of narrative between the different periods of his life. His written journal is mainly a succession of brief jottings of daily work. Occasionally, but especially on the recurrence of his birth-day and the New Year, these notes are extended; many of the lengthened entries are extracted, in order that his own language may develop the tone and spirit of his religious walk.

The discourses have been selected from those which were preached either repeatedly or on public occasions. The desire to make the volume accessible to all classes, even to the poorer families of the congregation, has stood in the way of the publication of more than a few. These sermons were not prepared for the press; titles even were not found attached to them.

It is believed that the author of the "Addresses to Young Men," had he been longer spared, would have

brought out a second edition of them, somewhat altered in style, and enlarged by illustrative cases. He entertained the idea of composing a series of similar addresses to young women.

If the readers of this volume derive half the pleasure and profit in perusing it, which I have done in deciphering and recording these memoirs of past years, I shall esteem my time well spent, and my labour not in vain. It is sent forth with the prayer that its perusal may be abundantly blessed by God to the revival and comfort of many. ‘Mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.’

W. K. M.

FREE CHURCH MANSE, CLUNY,

11th February, 1865.



Part First.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

SECTION I.—1795 TO 1822.

“The human blossom blows, and every day
Soft as it rolls along, shows some new charm,
The father’s lustre, and the mother’s bloom.”

THOMSON.

DAVID SIMPSON, the eldest of a large family, was the son of William Simpson and Ann Macrae. He was born at Findhorn, the town in which his parents resided, on the 22nd of May, 1795. The family moved in the humbler walks of life; the father following the business of a general-merchant. Both his father and mother were decidedly pious, and attended to the religious education of their children.

There was something remarkable in the way in which his father devoted him before his birth to the Lord. He made a solemn vow that, if his first-born

were a son, he would educate him for the ministry of the gospel. The family belonged to the Church of Scotland, but had no interest with any of her patrons. The faith of his father was so great that, when he mentioned his intention to any of his neighbours, and was met with a sneer for the presumptuousness of his wishes, he told them that he had no dependence on an arm of flesh, but that he trusted in God, who would provide for the boy a sphere of labour as soon as he was ready, and enable him, by his Holy Spirit, to serve in the work to which he had set him apart.

Mr. Simpson could never state any special time or circumstance from which he might date his conversion. It must have taken place at an early age ; he was one of those whose spiritual warmth and activity are seen to increase in proportion to the development of their powers of understanding and conscience. Those who knew him in youth, testify that there was always something about him more than is to be explained without a reference to the work of God's Spirit. This religiousness of character deterred him from joining with boys of his own age in wicked projects, although he was as playful and frolicsome as any. He was removed from his father's house to Cromarty when only four years old. He resided with his maternal uncle, and received at the Parish School his elementary education in English and Latin. To the last he retained a strong feeling of attachment for the town of his earliest recollection, which led him to visit it on several occasions during summer respites from pulpit labour. After eight years he returned to Findhorn, and for several

months attended the Parish School of Kinloss. The teacher considering him duly prepared for college, he commenced his higher literary and philosophical education at Marischal College, Aberdeen, before he had completed his fourteenth year, in 1808. In the intervals between his first three sessions he lived with his relations in Findhorn, and attended the Parish School, perfecting his acquaintance with the Latin and Greek languages and Mathematics. There are no memorials of his college course, beyond some essays written for the class of Mental and Moral Philosophy. At the termination of the fourth session he underwent the ordinary examinations, and took the degree of A.M.: he was then 17 years of age. During the later years of his college course, his heart was very earnestly directed to religion, and he cordially applied himself to preparation for the ministry. He used frequently to accompany his father to the religious gatherings at communion seasons in Morayshire, at which evangelical ministers officiated. Mr. Barron, a remarkably pious young man, who was studying for the Church, was teacher in Kinloss for two and a-half years: Mr. Simpson derived much spiritual benefit from him. God took this aspirant for the ministry to his heavenly home, before he obtained his heart's desire of preaching the gospel to perishing sinners.

Mr. Simpson was engaged to be family-tutor in Grangehall, the residence of Mr. Peterkin of Grange, in the parish of Kinloss, a year before he finished his curriculum at college. He had been recommended to this country gentleman by Mr. Barron. The unex-

pected death of Mr. Peterkin, before the tutor came to his house, rendered his duties truly responsible. He continued with the family about eleven and a-half years, that is, to the time of his ordination. During his residence at Grange, he frequently attended the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Stark, a gifted and popular minister of the Secession Church in Forres: thus did he early show that liberality of spirit towards evangelical ministers of all denominations, which distinguished him during his ministerial career.

He annually obtained leave of absence from the family with whom he was residing, to attend the Aberdeen Divinity Hall during six partial sessions. In after life, he deeply regretted that he had not enjoyed the advantage of full courses of theological lectures; but, in his private room, the Bible and books of divinity were his close companions, so that he could well say—"Grangehall was the best *Hall* to me." Experimental religion was faithfully attended to. On a Communion Monday, after partaking of the Lord's Supper, he copied out and signed a lengthy covenant engagement from Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." In connection with it, there is the following reflection two months later:—

"Sunday, August 18, 1816.

" This day I have perused this solemn engagement, and I must lament that depravity of heart leads me astray from God. How soon, alas! are the most vivid impressions of religion effaced from the mind. How soon do I return as the dog to his own vomit again, and as the sow from her

being washed to her wallowing in the mire. How little do I feel the power of religion on my soul. How cold and dead is my heart. Oh! may God of his infinite mercy illuminate my mind ; may he give me such a humbling view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin as may force me to exclaim, with the most heart-felt contrition—‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ and bring me as a weary heavy-laden sinner to a Redeemer’s blood, that I may obtain mercy and grace to help in every time of need. Amen and Amen !”

On joining the Divinity Classes in February, 1818, he writes to his parents as follows :—

“ May I be deeply affected with the consideration that, young and vigorous as I am, the hand which now writes, and the heart which throbs at the thought, may soon be mouldering in the dust, and my soul enter into an eternal and unchangeable state. May my hopes be placed on my adorable and compassionate Redeemer ; in deep contrition, may I be found at the feet of Jesus, pleading for mercy, where none, how vile soever, ever yet was allowed to perish. Highly favoured as I have been, from the very morning of my days, may God enable me to devote myself to the service and glory of that dear Redeemer, who I humbly trust loved me, and gave himself for me, a most unworthy and ungrateful creature, that, whether living or dying, I may be the Lord’s.”

Mr. Simpson was licensed as a preacher of the gospel by the Presbytery of Forres, on 28th April of the same year (1818), before he was twenty-three years of age. He officiated first in Rafford, choosing for his text—Hebrews ii. 3, ‘How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?’ There was considerable

anxiety to hear him in his native parish, Kinloss, which was gratified on the third Sabbath. Though he had still charge of the family before mentioned, his Sabbaths were constantly occupied with pulpit duties. He preached from time to time in Forres, Rafford, Kinloss, Edinkillie, Dyke, Alves, and Elgin. It is due to the memory of the deceased, to observe that he was remarkably popular as a youthful and evangelical preacher: not unfrequently men and women waited after sermon to shake hands with him. In illustration of this acceptability, the following anecdote is appropriate. He had preached in the church of Edinkillie; there happened to be no blinds upon the windows. An old man, waiting at the door to greet him, asked the preacher whether he was tired, and was told in reply that he felt rather warm from the sun shining upon him. The old man said emphatically—"Ou, aye! There were twa suns shinin' on ye."

In November the family of Grange, accompanied by their tutor, went to Edinburgh to enjoy the advantage of the winter classes of the college and schools of the Capital. One purpose of the Divine Disposer was very different from what man contemplated. Immediately after their arrival, all the young members of the family took measles, and three of them died. The duty which devolved on their guardian, near the close of the session, was very solemn, namely, to proceed north with their corpses, two of which had been buried in Edinburgh, but were disinterred at the death of the third child in spring. One son and two daughters returned after him; the latter being then

put under charge of a governess. During the winter, Mr Simpson preached occasionally in Edinburgh.

Soon thereafter, he officiated for six months on Sabbath days at Alves, for Mr. Duncan Grant, now senior Free Church minister of Forres. Mr. Simpson spent his last winter of private life in St Andrews with his pupil, and preached both in the town and college Churches, as also in Cupar. During his last summer at Grange, he established a Sabbath-school in Findhorn, and attended it almost every Lord's Day, often walking several miles to the school after preaching in some neighbouring parish. Parents and children attended in great numbers; and a strong testimony was thus given against the cold moderatism which had, for a lengthened period, reigned in that quarter.

SECTION II.—1822 TO 1825.

“ But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all.”

GOLDSMITH.

 NEW Chapel of Ease was built for the parish of Duffus in the sea-port of Burghead. The Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge allowed £20, and the Committee for managing the Royal Bounty other £20; whatever more salary the minister obtained, was derived from seat rents. The entire salary which could be relied on, for some time, was £60; from which £10 had to

be deducted to pay the rent of a house. The congregation unanimously elected Mr. Simpson to be their minister on 10th October, 1822. He was thus called to labour in the neighbourhood in which he had been born and brought up. Unexpected difficulties presented themselves from the coldness with which some of the members of Presbytery looked on this charge. In a way not usual the ordination-trials were put off from one meeting to another. The preacher-elect went to reside in Burghead, immediately after being chosen by the people; and in the interval of eight months, he applied himself with energy to meet their spiritual wants. It was not till 2nd July, 1823, that his settlement was effected; and then the ordination was performed in private, not to wound the feelings of the parish minister. From the increase of attendance in church, it became necessary to erect a gallery. The debt was ere long removed by special efforts among the congregation, and within the bounds of the Synod.

The children of the flock were carefully tended. After the regular services of the Sabbath, Mr. Simpson, unaided, taught a Sabbath evening school, before closing which, he gave a short lecture on some passage of Scripture. The place of meeting was often crowded to excess, by old as well as young. Referring to the bodily fatigue induced by these exertions, he remarked—"I hope some salutary impressions will be made upon the young, and thus will there be an ample recompense for all the toil." The following notes upon one of his sermons vividly open up the warmth and practical aim of his ministry at this

period. "When I see so many careless, profane, and perishing sinners before me, my spirit is in some degree stirred within me, and I give vent to my feelings with a degree of vehemence which some who do not see any reason for it mistake for passion. I had a short address to swearers, and I endeavoured with all the energy of which I was capable, to describe the enormity of this sin, and to point out its tremendous consequences. I was directing their attention to the judgment of the great day, and was asking swearers how they, who had so alarmingly trampled on God's authority and poured contempt on his Majesty, could stand in his awful presence. On such an occasion surely some degree of earnestness was allowable."

It is interesting to observe how early Foreign Missions secured a large share of his sympathies. There is extant a copy of a long missionary address which he delivered, while at Burghead. As it is of a general nature, it is unnecessary to quote from it.

About a year after his ordination, a vacancy occurred in Elgin, occasioned by the death of Dr. Gordon, one of its collegiate ministers. Mr. Simpson had frequently preached there before his settlement within the Presbytery. The patronage was in the hands of government; and the Earl of Liverpool, with his Home-Secretary, Mr Robert Peel, was disposed to abide by the recommendation of Town-Councils. A strong effort was made in the Council of Elgin to obtain his appointment. On the vote being taken, there was an equal number for him and Mr. Walker, the nominee of Lord Fife's party: the

latter was elected by the casting vote of the Provost. This movement in favour of Mr. Simpson was most gratifying to him, as he had not the slightest idea that he was to be put in nomination, and the support he received was therefore unsolicited. Though in this instance he did not come forward as a candidate, he entertained the thought of removal from Burghead in consequence of the smallness of the salary. It is to be observed, that though he adopted the side of Anti-patronage in the conflict within the Church of Scotland, it was at a sacrifice, since about this time he was brought by friends under the notice of two patrons of noble rank, and obtained a promise from a member of parliament that he would use his influence with Government in his behalf. His own remark was—"The best way of succeeding is to get a preacher's name on a patron's list, and in the course of time he will get a church." He was, however, indebted for promotion not to patronage but to popular election.

In October, 1824, the vacancy which was about to occur in Trinity Chapel, Aberdeen, through the presentation of its minister, Mr., afterwards Dr. John Murray, to one of the town's churches, was mentioned to him by a co-presbyter, Mr. Grant, who took a warm interest in his friend's success. Out of a large number of candidates, four were put on the leet, each to officiate two Sabbaths. The elders and managers of this large and important congregation were careful to test the varied qualifications of their candidates. Mr. Simpson, in addition to the pulpit duties, on the first Sabbath visited two Sabbath schools; during the

week spoke at a missionary meeting; on the second Sabbath visited three schools; and before leaving, attended a meeting of the congregational association for the diffusion of the Gospel. There was a powerful sensation produced; so much so, that on the last Sabbath, owing to the crowd assembled, many of the hearers could not reach their seats, and were obliged to retire. Along with the abundance of work, very great kindness was experienced by Mr. Simpson. From an early period, we see the large amount of religious life that pervaded a congregation which afterwards distinguished itself by its decided testimony to the principles of its founders. The excitement connected with the election was intense; and the exertions made by the supporters of the three popular candidates, increased as the decisive day approached. The credit of popular elections was well sustained throughout. The letter which communicated the result mentioned that there was never a more orderly and harmonious meeting in Trinity Chapel, and that the choice would be satisfactory to the great majority of those who did not vote for him. The second in order, Mr. Leith, afterwards minister of the South Parish, was early removed from the church below. Mr. Simpson preached and published a funeral sermon, in which he paid a high tribute to the memory of this young clergyman. The third was the Rev. Gavin Parker, afterwards minister of Bon-Accord Church, Aberdeen, who was long a co-presbyter and esteemed brother in the ministry. The call being accepted, Mr. Murray inducted his successor on the

3rd of May, 1825. The tie which was then formed lasted, with much comfort on both sides, during a period of thirty-nine years, until the Master called his servant to a higher sphere.

The parting with his congregation in Morayshire was a severe trial. The scene which occurred at the chapel on his last Sabbath among them, is still fresh in the memory of survivors. Mr Simpson, at the close of the farewell discourse, delivered a short and pointed appeal to his flock. The moment he mentioned his approaching departure, the people seemed as if struck by an electric shock. Many tears were shed, while they were bidding him adieu at the door; and he, unable to restrain his emotions, hastened home.

SECTION III.—1825 TO 1843.

“ Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet, and blossom in the dust.”



RINITY Chapel-of-Ease was built in 1794.* All its ministers had been decidedly evangelical, and its members were jealous of their ecclesiastical liberties. Shortly before Mr. Simpson's

* “In the year 1794, a vacancy having happened in the ministerial charge of Saint Nicholas Church, by the death of one of the incumbents, many of the congregation, who usually frequented the East Church, insisted upon having a minister to supply his place appointed by a popular call. This was refused by the Town Council, who, as lay patrons, presented a minister contrary to the inclinations of the congre-

coming to Aberdeen, a proposal, made for its erection into a parish church, was rejected by the congregation. The weekly attendance was large, reaching an average of 1200. After the Assembly's Chapel Act of 1834, a contiguous and compact district was separated from the South Parish for Trinity "*Quoad Sacra*" Church. The parishioners were principally tradesmen, and operatives in manufactories. Intemperance was very prevalent.

The new pastor lost no time in making himself acquainted with the families and members of his flock:

gation, and a division among them was the consequence. Those who were disaffected to the presentee applied to the Presbytery, in the common form to erect a Chapel of Ease for their own accommodation. That revered body, being impressed with a conviction that the increasing population of Aberdeen required an additional place of worship under the Established Church, readily granted their request. A chapel having accordingly been erected on the grounds belonging to the Trades' Hospital, on the south side of the Shiprow, the congregation, after trial of the qualifications of different preachers, appointed Mr. Robert Doig to be their pastor, in the month of October of that year, and the Presbytery having sanctioned the nomination, he was ordained accordingly. He continued in this ministerial charge till the year 1813, when, being nominated one of the ministers of the Established Church, he demitted his office, and was succeeded by the late Mr. Kirkland. After his death, Mr. John Murray, the present incumbent, was appointed pastor, in the year 1816, in consequence of a call from the constituent members.

This is a large and commodious place of worship, and the congregation at present exceed fourteen hundred persons. The expense of erecting the chapel was about £2000 sterling, the greater part of which was raised by voluntary contribution of the original constituent members. The seat rents are appropriated to the payment of the minister's stipend, which is £200 sterling yearly, and to the support of the establishment. The clergyman is also provided with a good dwelling house, built at the expense of the congregation." *Kennedy's Annals of Aberdeen 1818.*

he visited them at the almost incredible rate of thirty or forty families in a day. The minister with whom at this stage he had most intercourse, and with whom he frequently exchanged brotherly services at communion-seasons, was Dr. Kidd. Shortly after occupying his new sphere of labour he allied himself in marriage with Miss Jane Kinnaird, an Edinburgh lady. Besides the ordinary labours to which the minister of a large town charge is called to attend, Mr. Simpson interested himself in special congregational movements, as also in more public enterprises.

He issued an appeal for the formation of a Congregational Library, which was heartily responded to. The following extract evinces his sense of the importance of an extensive religious literature adapted to the times. "We wish not only that the Bible were universally in the hands of the people, but also to give them access to a variety of other books which are calculated to explain, to illustrate, and to enforce its contents. In the present age a taste for reading has been very generally diffused ; it is, therefore, of the greatest importance that the taste be gratified by providing a supply of instructive and interesting books. For this purpose small libraries have been attached to many Churches and Chapels and Sabbath Schools, and they have proved eminently beneficent. In this local institution the people are found to take a deep interest, and by means of the books which are put within their reach, their views are greatly expanded and enlarged, their principles strengthened and improved, their laudable curiosity gratified, their consciences affected, their

hearts impressed, their zeal excited, their activity stimulated, and their prospects brightened. . . . Where is the Christian who on reading the life of some illustrious disciple of the Redeemer has not felt himself disposed to exclaim, ‘Alas my leanness, my leanness ! how little progress I have made in the way to heaven ! how small a portion of the spirit of my Divine Master I have imbibed in comparison with those excellent men !’ And have there not also been many instances of real conversions to God arising from the perusal of the lives of departed saints ? Have not the strongest prejudices thereby been removed, and the infinite value and excellence of the gospel been felt and acknowledged ? Is not this a motive to persuade us to read diligently and with earnest prayer for the Divine blessing such valuable books ?”

Mr. Simpson’s sentiments on the lawfulness and terms of a connexion between Church and State were early formed. He took a decided stand in the controversy with those Dissenters that were opposed to a National Establishment, and, even before he was a preacher, addressed meetings on the subject of Church Establishments. Accordingly, he took an active part, along with the Rev. Mr. Gray of Woodside, afterwards better known as Andrew Gray of Perth, in organizing the Aberdeen Auxiliary Young Men’s Association for the Defence and Extension of the Established Church of Scotland. We submit the second of a series of resolutions drawn up by him for the public meeting held on its formation : “That entertaining a profound veneration for the doctrines, discipline, and government of

our National Church, and reckoning it one of the greatest blessings which God has been pleased to bestow upon this country, the members of this institution consider themselves bound to exert themselves vigorously to repel the attacks of its enemies, to strengthen the attachment of its friends, and to perpetuate its benefits through all succeeding generations." Within the Establishment, the evangelical and liberal party was gaining strength. From the commencement of his ministerial career in town, he heartily co-operated with those brethren who adopted the cause of Anti-patronage. He delivered a lengthened address at the first meeting of the Aberdeen Anti-patronage Society. In a report which he wrote for one of its annual meetings, there are remarks pregnant with meaning, when read in the light of the Disruption and the privilege of popular election enjoyed within the Free Church of Scotland :—" May we not cherish the pleasing hope that there will be few congregations so careless and lukewarm as not to express their detestation of patronage and their earnest desire to be delivered from it? Their distinguished forefathers remonstrated against it in the strongest terms, and would have made any personal sacrifice to procure its abolition. It would be a most melancholy event, if, through the indolence and supineness of the members of the Establishment, the Government should be led to suppose that a very partial change in the existing mode of appointing ministers to vacant parishes, is all that is necessary or desirable."

The questions of general interest which enlisted his

sympathies and secured his exertions, were Anti-slavery, Foreign Missions, the Sabbath, Bible and Religious Tracts' circulation, and Temperance gradually merging into Total Abstinence.

Foreign Missions afforded him opportunities of co-operating with religious brethren of other sections of the visible church of Christ. He cordially approved of the London Missionary Society, and ardently desired its prosperity. Yet, he gave a more vigorous support to the Scottish Missionary Society, and took an active part in the rise and progress of the Aberdeen Auxiliary to that institution, not only joining at its meetings in town, but serving as one of a deputation to the surrounding district. Further, at a time when the females of India were little thought of by Christians at home, he called attention to their sad condition.

Of all questions, however, of public religious interest, the Sabbath was that which he watched with the greatest vigilance. He published and circulated an address to the Christian proprietors of the Aberdeen and London Steamers on the profanation of the Lord's Day, occasioned by their vessels being at sea on Sabbath. About the same time he wrote out a memorial for a public meeting on Sabbath observance, and spoke on the subject in presbytery.

Mr. Simpson directed much of his time and thoughts towards the young. Two series of his Sermons and Addresses to Young Men are in print; the one belonging to the earlier period of his ministry, the other to the later. The printed Sermons of the former series were only a few out of a long course, commenced on

New-Year's Day of 1833, and delivered on the first Tuesday of each month. His views on the Christian education of the young are pointedly expressed in a letter circulated by him, when in 1835 he organised a scheme in co-operation with his elders and managers for the erection of a parochial school :—" If we wish to raise our city population from the degradation and misery to which multitudes of them have been reduced ; if we wish them again to acquire those steady habits by which they were once so prominently distinguished, we must make the Christian education of children an object of deepest solicitude, and we must use our utmost exertions to procure for them that precious blessing. But if we allow them to grow up around us in ignorance and vice, without making any vigorous attempts to infuse into their minds right principles, and to communicate to them salutary instruction, we shall not do so with impunity." The effort to raise money was eminently successful. It was proposed to collect £150, which, with the aid of a grant from Government of the same amount, was to suffice for the erection of a suitable structure. The most sanguine expectations were more than realized ; for by the persevering exertions of the office-bearers, assisted by the young ladies of the congregation, £230 were collected, and £220 were received from the Public Treasury. There was an upper story for the more advanced classes, with a lower for the infant school. Mr. (now Dr.) Longmuir was appointed Head-master, and Sabbath Evening Lecturer in Trinity Church, as also Missionary for the parish. The numbers in at-

tendance at the school, a few months after its opening, were reported at 188 in the upper, and 100 in the lower section. It may be observed that the prayer which the minister offered up—namely, that a succession of pious, able, laborious, and devoted men might preside over that seminary, was strikingly fulfilled : three of those, who during a period of eight years filled the post of head-master, are now zealous and honoured ministers of the Free Church. The school still stands ; but it has fallen into other hands than those which designed and paid for it.

In the summer of the same year (1837), Mr. Simpson repaired for relaxation to Strathpeffer. On resuming his labours, he seems to have overtired his constitution. He was almost prostrated before the October communion. He officiated on that occasion only to be removed in a state of physical exhaustion to the country-house of Mrs. Gall, his sister-in-law, near Lasswade. During this illness, all ranks and denominations manifested their affection for him, and bore testimony to the great good he had done in his parish and among his flock. In his retirement, his heart was encouraged by the assurance, which several of his hearers communicated to him, that his ministry had been blessed to their souls : thus, a female wrote to him of the privilege she had enjoyed in attending his classes for religious instruction, which had laid her under obligations for which, while she owed gratitude in the first place to God the bestower of all blessings, she must ever feel more indebted to her beloved minister than she could to any other human being.

He responded to these communications by a general letter, in which he conveyed an expression of his feelings, and evinced how warmly he esteemed and reciprocated his people's affection. He rallied with wonderful rapidity, so as to be able to resume pulpit labours with the new year, while Mr. Reid, now minister at Banchory-Ternan, officiated at one diet each Sabbath for the first quarter. Thus commenced a happy intercourse that continued to the end of his life.

From 1st January 1839, Mr. Simpson kept a regular journal of daily engagements, occasionally expanded into spiritual reflections. The visitation of the congregation was carried on stately from Tuesday to Thursday for about three hours each day. After his Sabbath sermons, he addressed one or all of three evening schools. The Ten Years' Conflict within the Church of Scotland was advancing. There could be no doubt with which party he would co-operate. Being a member of Assembly, he attended the meeting of Commission in December 1839, which suspended the seven Strathbogie ministers. To shew his thorough approval of the sentence of the majority, he went, according to the appointment of the Church, to Huntly to intimate its sentence within the bounds of that presbytery. He travelled in company with Messrs. Murray, Gordon, and Spence, ministers, who were on a similar errand, and his elder and personal friend Mr. Watson. It was his duty to serve the suspension on Mr. Walker of Huntly: he preached in the large room of the inn there. Thenceforward, meetings were frequently held

to explain to his flock the principles of Non-intrusion ; and in 1841 an association was formed among them for the defence of the Church of Scotland. Nor did he confine his exertions to Aberdeen, as from time to time he assisted at Anti-patronage and Non-intrusion meetings within the bounds of the Synod.

The Total Abstinence cause also enlisted his energies. Besides attending not a few meetings and soirees, he preached the New Year's Sermon of the Society in 1842.

In this year he repaired, with other ministers of Aberdeen, to Marnoch, to take part in the induction of Mr. Henry at Aberchirder, under the painful necessity of setting at naught, as unconstitutional, the Note of Suspension and Interdict which had been procured from the Court of Session.

Being duly at his post at the meeting of Convocation in Edinburgh, Mr. Simpson took part, by request, in its devotions. A short remark exhibits the spirit that influenced him, along with many servants of God there present. "It is truly delightful and refreshing to observe the noble Christian spirit with which the Convocation is animated. Seventy preachers have addressed the Convocation, adhering to the principles of the majority. This is cheering. The Church is now in a most glorious attitude, though times of trial are evidently at hand." Besides taking part in all the solemn and important acts of the Disruption Assembly, he appeared, one of thirteen ministers including Drs. Gordon and Mackellar, at the bar of the Court of Session to be rebuked for breach of Interdict.

In order to give a suitable view of the heavenly-mindedness which pervaded Mr. Simpson's life, it is not only desirable but essential that, before concluding this chapter, we present some notices of the internal spiritual life of this servant of God.

It was his habit to read methodically, in secret retirement, a portion of some book of experimental religion. The advantage of such an exercise is forcibly illustrated by him. "This year I have derived great benefit from reading after the Bible, a portion of Howe's 'Delighting in God,' and of his 'Blessedness of the Righteous.'" "Marshall's book on 'Inward Revival,' has been much blessed to me this year." Again: "I have finished Romaine's 'Walk of Faith,' and I found it very useful to me." Of a fourth year: "I read a second time Howe's 'Delighting in God,' and found it precious, and a means of reviving my soul. James's 'Pastoral Addresses' have also been very useful to me."

1839, Jan. 9.—"Thanksgiving for the Harvest. A very comfortable day. Much spiritual enjoyment. God manifested himself to my soul. Is this the manner of men? O Lord God."

1840, Jan. 2.—"Confined to the house. Prayer meeting in the evening in support of the Church of Scotland; unable to attend; but God was pleased to favour me with a very solemn and delightsome season of secret prayer; enabled, I trust, to lay hold of the covenant."

May 3.—"This day the 15th anniversary of 'my settlement in Trinity; preached forenoon and after-

noon from Isa. xlix. 4. A solemn day. The Lord accompany his truth with a rich blessing ! Considerably revived. O that my ministry were abundantly blessed !”

1841, Oct. 10.—“A Communion Sabbath. This, blessed be God ! has been a delightful season to my soul. My soul was enlarged and drawn out in love to God. Never, perhaps, was more vigorous in body or favoured with more calm enjoyment. God has been answering the prayers we have been offering on this occasion. What shall I render to the Lord ?”

Mr. Simpson, on the last day of each year, closed the passing, and saw in the new year, with religious exercises ; to which he assembled his domestic circle. He generally made a devotional entry on the 31st of December.

1839, Dec., 31.—“Was not so deeply impressed, nor able to engage in such continued exercises as at the conclusion of the former year ; but felt tender during the time of prayer. O how much of the Lord’s goodness have I experienced during the passing year ! Much cause for deep humiliation on account of my unprofitableness, but also much cause of thankfulness for the kindness of God to me, and for what he has enabled me to do in his service. O that during this opening year I may grow greatly in faith, love, patience, humility, devotedness to God’s glory ! May God, my Heavenly Father, vouchsafe to me abundantly the influences of His Spirit, that I may grow more and more in meetness for His heavenly kingdom.”

1842, Dec. 31.—“Engaged to-day in preparation for the services of to-morrow, and did not devote so much time to meditation and other devotional exercises as usual; but I was enabled, however feebly, to commit all my interests into the hands of God, my Heavenly Father. How much, how very much of the goodness of the Lord have I enjoyed this year! Not a day’s bad health during the whole period. When I look back, I see much cause to lament that I have not made more progress in the divine life, corresponding to my obligations and advantages, that the spirit of devotion has so often languished, and that consequently I enjoy so little hallowed communion with God. But I trust I am enabled to fall down before the cross, and to plead Emmanuel’s righteousness and Emmanuel’s blood, and to derive peace from believing.”

SECTION IV.—1843 TO 1862.

“ Does he not warn us all to seek
The happier land on high,
Where flowers immortal never wither.”

LONGFELLOW.

 O the ministers and congregations of the Disruption, the summer of 1843 was an anxious and eventful time. Mr. Simpson returned to his people direct from the first Assembly of the Free Church. He had reason to believe, and was grateful to God for the hope, that, in his case, most of

the sheep would follow the shepherd ; as in January, no fewer than 470 communicants had in one evening signed their adherence to the resolutions of the Convocation. He preached from John xiv. 31, "Arise, let us go hence," on the occasion of his taking farewell of Trinity Church ; the sermon was printed, and the profits were devoted to the purchase of books for a new congregational library. It was known that few would remain in connection with the Established Church. Having, at the close of his discourse, addressed those who were convinced that duty to the Great Head of the Church required them to depart from a place of worship which was associated in their minds with many interesting and affecting recollections, he spoke for the last time, conscientiously and tenderly, to the portion that had resolved to abide members of the existing Establishment :—"I might say much, but I forbear. They have formed *their* opinions on the great questions lately agitated, and I have formed *mine* ; and by the consequences of our decision we must respectively abide. A day is approaching, which will try each man's work what kind it is ; and 'my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is, that they may be saved.' I part with them not in anger, but in sorrow ; and if I have failed to declare to them any part of the counsel of God, or neglected any pastoral duty which I owed to them, I beseech God to forgive me. It is a very affecting thought that the pastoral tie between them and me is now about to be severed, and severed for ever. And surely on such an occasion, I may, without any presumption, suggest to them the pro-

priety of considering what benefit they have derived from the ministry under which they have been for some time placed, and which, in their case, is this day to terminate. The connexion of a minister with his people is of a peculiarly solemn nature, and ought not on either side to be rashly dissolved. But when it has been *in fact* dissolved, whether justifiably or not, it becomes the minister and those who are no longer to be under his ministry, seriously to examine themselves in regard to the past, and to look forward to that solemn day when they must meet again at the judgment-seat of Christ. It is my earnest desire and prayer that we may all yet be of one mind in the Lord ; that we may all be subjects of His regenerating grace, and interested in His great salvation ; and that we may all be at length admitted into His heavenly kingdom, where there is no diversity of opinion, and no estrangement of affection among the blessed inhabitants, and where pain and grief and sorrow are known no more. Amen." In this generous spirit did the forthgoing minister bid adieu to those who were not to follow him ; but it was not to be their portion to worship long in the building which had, from its first opening, been hallowed by faithful evangelical ministrations. After repeated attempts to occupy the position of a congregation of the Establishment, the small section which remained behind, was entirely broken up ; and Old Trinity, with its every pane of glass broken, and its windows filled up with wood, stands a conspicuous and durable memorial of the grasping spirit which set at naught both the will and the rights of the people,

within what was formerly the Church of Scotland. We give our friends in the Establishment equal credit for deliberation and candour in coming to a decision on the great principles at stake in the controversy which issued in the Disruption. Many of them were disturbed by fears of anarchy in the State and confusion in the Church. Time has proved that the Scottish mind was thoroughly moved, and that the sentiments and principles put forward by the leaders of the evangelical party, were those indeed which had been dear to the nation since its reformation from Popery, and that they were pregnant with power both to sustain and to extend that Church which demanded the right of asserting and teaching them uncontrolled by the Civil power in matters purely spiritual.

The retiring congregation were kindly accommodated first in Melville, and then, as it proved too small, in Union Church. Measures were speedily adopted and vigorously carried out, by which Free Trinity Church, in Crown Street, was opened on 31st March, 1844. The collection on that occasion amounted to £218 16s. The feeling swelling in the minister's heart, found outlet in a short but pithy entry in his journal :—"A most interesting day. Here I raise another Ebenezer. Bless the Lord, O my soul!" From this time, Mr. Simpson may be enrolled among the fathers in the ministry. Several young men who were reared under his pastoral care, obtained charges in the Free Church; and in addition to the brethren of his own standing, with whom he used to exchange at communion-seasons, he delighted to carry

out sacramental fellowship with the plants of his own spiritual husbandry.

His attention to pastoral duties was unremitting : from time to time he was rewarded with refreshing intercourse with the dying, for which he was truly grateful to his Divine Master. A few examples of spiritual conversation at death-beds may be profitable. *First*, "I visited ———. He began by saying that he expected I would be putting some questions to him about the state of his mind. I replied that I felt a great delicacy in doing so to a person like him, but that I would be glad to converse with him on the subject. Finding that he had not that comfort and establishment which might have been expected, I reminded him that bodily disease often has a very depressing effect upon the mind, and mentioned the case of Scott. I spoke to him of the well-ordered covenant ; of Christ as the substitute of His people ; of His people being complete in him ; and of the intercession which He carries on before His Father's throne. These views, he said, were consoling, and he would endeavour to profit by them. Being depressed on account of his present languor in prayer, he told me that some time before, he had been reading the Scriptures with deep interest, and such views had been presented to him when reading them in the family, that he dwelt on them with great delight. I reminded him that we were not to judge of our state by our present feelings, but by the decided preference we gave to God above all things in the universe. He acquiesced, and then I engaged with him in prayer ; when

we rose from the exercise he seemed much affected, thanked me very cordially for my visit, and said he would consider the views I had set before him. How deeply I feel my unworthiness to speak to him on such a subject ; but what a cause of thankfulness that he seems to have been refreshed by my visits !”—*Second* : “Called on —. After prayer with him he seemed to be deeply affected ; he expressed his great affection to me as his pastor ; assured me, as he had done before, that I was his spiritual father ; that he had often sat with great delight, and, he trusted, with profit, under my ministry ; hoped that I would yet be spared to be a blessing to many ; and then intimated that he had done with the world ; and in very affectionate terms commended his soul to God, expressing his hopes of being admitted to dwell in his presence for ever ; implored the grace of God to be with him during his remaining days ; and declared his determination to commit his spirit to the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘Lord Jesus ! receive my spirit.’ This was a very touching interview ; and I gave thanks to God, that he had been pleased to bless my ministry to his soul. O that he would bless me, and make me a blessing !”—*Third* : the case of a young female. “Her father told me she was in a stupor at the time, and was scarcely seeing or recognising any one, but that I might look at her. I did so for some time on her countenance, O how changed ! Suddenly turning round a little, and opening her eyes, she instantly recognised me, held out her hands to me, raised my hand which she affectionately held to her mouth, and kissed it. It was a most touching moment ; and I was very

deeply affected. She spoke of the delight with which she often heard me, and of her earnest desire to attend the house of God. She had often wished to speak to me about her soul. ‘I wish you had ; it would have given great delight to converse with you ; but God himself was then speaking to you, and drawing your heart to himself.’ ‘I will never see you again in this world.’ ‘Well,’ I replied, ‘I trust we will meet again in the better world, where parting is unknown.’ She retained my hand for a considerable time, when I asked if she could hear me pray. To this she agreed ; but begged that I would say nothing to touch her feelings, for she could not weep. She also said, looking round her, while her sister was weeping at the foot of her bed and her brother was standing beside her, her mother sitting near her and her father standing over her, ‘How difficult to leave so many dear friends !’ ‘Ah, yes ! but the Lord in whom you confide is sufficient for them, and will sustain them ; and I trust they will all in due time follow you to the same blessed world. I then very shortly prayed and bade her farewell, not again expecting to see her in life. She expired in the evening. Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. O may I be daily looking forward to this great change, and be preparing for it !’

Mr. Simpson continued to the close of his life to interest himself in institutions of public benevolence, by taking part at their annual meetings and meetings of committee. Chief among these, were the House of Refuge, Sheriff Watson’s School of Industry, and the Infirmary. He still came forward to

uphold the cause of the Sabbath and of Foreign Missions, with a readiness which shewed his undiminished zeal in their behalf.

During the years 1846-7, no special incident occurred, except the death of his highly esteemed elder, Professor Bentley, which took place in August of the former of these years. These were, however, seasons of decidedly spiritual fervour.

18th November, 1846.—“For some time God has been graciously reviving me. Have been favoured with several delightful seasons. God is bestowing on me, blessed be His name! the grace of His Holy Spirit. I do here record with grateful heart His marvellous kindness and grace. O that I may be enabled to live near to Him! Lord! undertake for me; hold up my goings.

20th December, 1847.—“Spent a very solemn and delightful evening in communion with God. Blessed be His name for His distinguishing grace!

22d December.—“Spent a very happy day in delightful communion with my God and Father. O my unspeakable obligation to Him! Well may I say ‘What shall I render to the Lord?’ O that I were more and more spiritually minded! The light of God’s countenance—that is blessed indeed. May my ministry be accompanied with power from on high! O that there were a shaking among the dry bones!

The year 1846 was signalised by the commencement of a ‘Home Mission,’ in connexion with Free Trinity Church. The district selected for its operations was the south part of College Street and Lower Denburn.

Several members of the congregation took a lively interest in the mission, and soon Sabbath and week-day evening schools were established, and prayer meetings held, in different parts of the district. At the sametime, lady visitors were appointed to distribute tracts, inquire into the temporal and spiritual condition of the people, and assist the necessitous in sending their children to school. These schemes progressed satisfactorily, and, through the kindness of two of the office-bearers of the congregation, were greatly aided by the appointment of a 'Bible Woman' to labour in the district. Later in the history of the mission, a 'Mothers' Meeting' was organised, having for its special aim the spiritual and temporal improvement of the mothers. It still continues. The women assemble once a-week for about two hours, in company with several of the lady visitors, one of whom reads from an interesting and instructive book, while the mothers are procuring and making clothing for themselves and their families. At the close of the meeting, a short address is given, and devotional exercises are conducted by the minister or missionary attending. Not long after, a Dorcas Society was formed to provide clothing for the poorer members of the congregation. For a considerable period much inconvenience was felt from the want of suitable accommodation for carrying on these benevolent undertakings; but at last, through the untiring exertions of a Committee of the Deacons' Court, centrical and commodious premises were erected in the Lower Denburn, and opened on the 22d of October, 1862. Thus Mr. Simpson was

brought anew into territorial connexion with the more destitute classes of the community.

Mr. Simpson derived much pleasure from rural and highland scenery. From the time of his protracted illness, he annually spent four or five weeks in excursions for the benefit of his health ; Mrs. Simpson always accompanied him on these occasions. After returning from one of these trips, he concludes his notice of it with praise and confession : "How much of God's preserving care have I experienced ; but how very ungrateful have I been ! I have deep cause to be ashamed that my spiritual interests always suffer, while I am thus from home ; heart, exceedingly cold and languid ; prayers, exceedingly dull and formal. The Lord revive me !" The following year, 1848, found him in England. "Went to Edinburgh by coach and rail ; on Thursday, to Hastings ; on Friday to Brighton and back ; on Saturday, attended the Church of England twice, and once in the Baptist Chapel ; on Monday, returned to London and visited the Parks ; on Tuesday, Mr. Bryce joined me from Hastings ; on Wednesday evening, embarked on board the Triton steamer for Edinburgh, and after a stormy passage arrived on Friday evening ; on Sabbath, heard Mr. Simpson and Mr. Bruce ; on Monday, Miss Kinnaird and I had a very pleasant excursion to the Falls of the Clyde ; Tuesday, a very rainy day ; returned to Edinburgh on Wednesday, and home on Thursday. O how great the goodness of God, who graciously preserved me from every danger by land and by water ! How ungrateful am I ! Alas

my spiritual health always suffers when I go from home." In keeping with the tone of this last reflection, we add another written in the same year, that anxious converts and lowly minded disciples may not be staggered, as sometimes they are, when they read only comfortable and triumphant meditations in religious biography. December 22d.—"How very different, alas, my frame of mind this evening from what it was this day month! O what languor and coldness have been upon me! How indolent and slothful! How little heart in my devotional exercises! Lord, forgive me; revive me."

Two traits of Mr. Simpson's mind—susceptibility and spirituality—are prominent in his account of the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851. August 4th.—"I do not now wonder that no one attempts to describe it, for the countless number and extreme beauty and endless variety of the articles that are every moment presenting themselves to our view, render it impossible to convey any adequate idea of it. I do not suppose that, since the creation of the world, so many rare, valuable, and splendid articles have been collected together under one roof. I was particularly struck with the extraordinary magnificence of the gold and silver department, and with the brilliancy of the jewelry. It was a most magnificent scene to look down from the galleries to the prodigious mass of human beings moving below, extending nearly as far as from Union Street Bridge to the Cross. So many of my fellow mortals I never before saw at one glance; and how solemn the thought that one soul even of the

meanest rustic among them, is of incomparably greater value than the Crystal palace and all that it contains. There is no sight more interesting to me than a vast assemblage of immortal beings, who are soon to stand at the judgment seat of Christ. All nations are said to be represented in the Crystal palace; but all nations must personally appear at the judgment seat of Christ. It was very interesting to meet with persons of all tongues and nations and languages. May it be a precursor of the speedy arrival of that period when nation shall no more rise up against nation nor learn war any more. It must be gratifying in the highest degree to Prince Albert, to find his happy conception so magnificently realized. It must transmit his name with greater honour to posterity, than that of any of England's most warlike sovereigns." There were many at that time visiting Paris; Mr. Simpson went thither with Dr. Edersheim; and making the most of a few days, he explored the principal objects of interest in the French capital. On Sabbath he repaired to worship in the forenoon at an English Episcopal chapel, and in the evening at the Rev. Frederick Monod's.

Another summer trip, that of 1855, afforded him much gratification: in it he repaired to Montpelier Villa, the house of Mr. Henderson, one of the elders of Trinity Church, then residing in St. John's Wood, London. Along with friendly company he enjoyed the inspection of several of the noble institutions of the Metropolis. He extended his rambles to the Isle of Wight; the sun shone most beautifully on its

charming scenery. He walked from Newport to Brading to view the grave of little "Jane the Young Cottager," and saw there a very old sexton, who had known her and her parents, and had served Legh Richmond. The old man expatiated on the good qualities of the revered writer of this and other beautiful religious tracts. The same day he went to see the grave of the "Dairyman's Daughter" at Arreton. Blairgowrie was taken on the way to Aberdeen; and much of the romantic scenery of Perthshire was visited under the guidance of his kind hostess, Mrs. Dingwall Fordyce of Brucklay and Culsh.

Mr. Simpson attained his sixtieth birth-day that summer, 1855. It is not to be supposed that such a season would be spent without serious reflections. "The three-score years of the psalmist have passed away, and I have entered upon the ten. I know not how few may now be before me. I give thanks to God for his multiplied mercies through bygone years, in grateful remembrance. I implore his direction, grace, and favour during all my remaining days. O that, as I am now descending into the vale of years, my affections may be more and more ascending to the things that are above; may I feel that my grand object is to bless and glorify my God and Father, and to be prepared for admission into his presence. O Lord! be with me all my journey through, and crown my journey's end. O sanctify to my soul my dear mother's departure, and the return of my birth-day at this time! Sixty years ago she gave me birth; she is now waiting to be committed to the grave."

The fact that his mother's corpse lay ready to be interred the following day, was a somewhat singular coincidence. Aged, and in the latter part of her life blind, she had lived for some years in his house under the watchful care of Mrs. Simpson, Jun. Two additional entries are made in this connexion. "It is solemn and affecting to see a mother die; Lord, impress this scene deeply on my heart, and may I be continually preparing for the same great change." Again—after obtaining possession of a burying-ground in Nellfield Cemetery. "It is solemn and affecting to fix upon the spot where my body is to lie till the last trumpet sound." Much about the same time, the departure from this vale of tears of various dear friends greatly moved him. His niece, Miss Margaret Anne Mitchell, to whom he was much attached, died in Edinburgh, in 1853. "O, what an affecting dispensation! May the impression of her committal to the narrow house be engraven on my heart." Only a week thereafter, a peculiar friend of his early days—Mr Shepherd of Elgin—on his way to Ballater, took up his abode for a night in his house. They had spent the evening cheerfully together; and all the inmates had retired to rest, when suddenly at midnight the Lord called the visitor hence. The body having been removed to Elgin by his friends, Mr. Simpson followed and preached his funeral sermon. He discharged the same ministerial duty in memory of Mr. Forbes of Wood-side, and Dr. Murray of Free North Church. The latter of these is mentioned along with other distinguished friends, of whose services the Free Church

was deprived in 1861. "Dr. Murray, Mr. Philip o' Portobello, Mr. Gray of Perth, and Dr. Cunningham, have died during this year. May the Lord impress these solemn dispensations upon my heart, and give me grace to be daily preparing for eternity." Ministers who have themselves known suffering, are enabled to address mourners sympathetically as well as profitably. Mr. Simpson was always fond of children; it was in the same year that he administered consolation by letter to a father and mother, from whose family the Lord had recently removed three infant children: "Very sincerely do I sympathise with you under the painful bereavements with which it has pleased your Heavenly Father to visit you, and earnestly do I pray that they may be sanctified to you. When stroke after stroke thus falls upon your dear children, it must be peculiarly trying to your parental feelings. But I am truly thankful that you are well acquainted with the only source of consolation under such painful afflictions, and that you consider all the events that have befallen you as the wise and gracious appointments of your Heavenly Father, who knows exactly what is fitted to be profitable to your souls, and that you are persuaded that, though no affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous, nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. I have no doubt you will mingle thanksgiving with your tears, though he has gone into His garden of flowers, which he gave you to cultivate and enjoy for a time, and has plucked one, and a second,

and a third of them, only, however, to transplant them into His own paradise above, where, in a more genial clime and a richer soil, their beauty and loveliness shall expand and increase through all eternity. And thereby in regard to them we may now say—

This lovely bud, so young, so fair,
Called hence by early doom,
Just came to show how sweet a flower
In paradise would bloom.

Your prayer, I doubt not, on this occasion may be expressed in the words of the hymn—

Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee ;
Even though it be a cross
That raiseth me,
Still all my song shall be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.”

India continued to draw forth a large amount of careful thought and hearty good wishes from Mr. Simpson. He was glad to learn of young men devoting themselves to the missionary cause, even when he had to bid adieu to those whom he held dear by ties of relationship. It was in 1852 that the author of this sketch, who had been under his guardian care for nineteen years, returned to the land of his birth to labour as a missionary of the Free Church. He undertook the trying service of preaching the ordination sermon and setting his relative apart. September 8 : “Parted with dear W. on his voyage to India. Lord, bless him and keep him ! and if it be Thy will that we never meet again on the earth, O may we meet in Thy

presence above! May I be reminded how rapidly my time is passing away. May my days be spent in habitual preparation for another and a better world. I thank God that W. has given himself to so noble a work." He felt that there was no part of the world which had more powerful claims on the benevolent efforts of British Christians than India, to confer on it the most valuable of all blessings—the Gospel of Christ—the knowledge and belief of which have raised the inhabitants of Britain to so distinguished a position among the nations of the earth. Accordingly at the time of the Indian Mutiny, he called the attention of the public, by a series of resolutions proposed by him in Presbytery, to the countenance which had in various ways been given by the civil authorities in that land to heathen idolatry, and to the duty lying on churches of increasing their exertions to communicate a knowledge of Christianity to its various tribes. A few months before, he had addressed the students of Marischal College on Missions; and in the following month he preached, at request, a sermon to the Students' Missionary Association. For many years he was the corresponding member of the Synod of Aberdeen with the Foreign Missions' Committee; and in this capacity he was present at all the meetings of the Conference on Foreign Missions held at Edinburgh in November, 1861.

Great religious interest and excitement were felt in Aberdeen for about two years, commencing with the last quarter of 1859. Laymen from a distance took a lively part in the work of that season of revival. The

subject of this memoir found no difficulty in co-operating with them. Having gone to hear Mr. Radcliffe on his arrival in the North, he took part in the meeting and addressed thirty inquirers at the end of the service. On two successive days he attended the religious meetings which were held on the links in summer. Also, in the course of that movement, crowded assemblies met in the Music Hall on Sabbath evenings ; to these Mr. Simpson occasionally resorted. In like manner, he repeatedly heard the addresses of Mr. Richard Weaver. And when the daily prayer meetings were instituted, he frequently repaired to them. One who was so anxious about the revival of his own soul, rejoiced in the awakening of others ; so much so, that he requested those devoted labourers to report to him the names of any anxious inquirers belonging to his congregation, with whom they came in contact, that he might watch their progress and lead them forward in the Christian course. From his lengthened experience in dealing with souls in the commencement of their religious life, he was quite prepared to find that, at a season of revival in which God blessed the earnestness and fidelity of strangers, young people brought for the first time to think seriously of their eternal concerns, repaired for advice to those who had arrested their attention ; and he wished all success to their disinterested exertions ; yet he believed it of great importance that the state of mind of each inquirer should be known by his pastor, who would be able to discriminate cases of temporary excitement from those of decided conver-

sion, and to deal appropriately with them. At the same time he regretted the timidity which persons in spiritual perplexity often allow to gain an advantage over them, so as to keep them back from their own ministers, who could meet the specialties of their experience, and would be encouraged by knowing that the work of grace was advancing under them.

The books of spiritual and practical religion, perused by Mr. Simpson during the period embraced in this chapter, seem to have been chiefly those of modern divines. The works of Dr. James Buchanan and of Messrs Winslow and Angell James were especially esteemed by him. He thus counsels a perplexed soul that had been recently converted. "Dr. James Buchanan's work on the Holy Spirit is one of great value, which I have repeatedly perused with great delight and edification, particularly the chapter on the Spirit of adoption. I have been favoured with much spiritual enjoyment, while endeavouring to appropriate its language. This precious volume enters into the very life and soul of religion, and gives the most lucid view of those truths which the Holy Spirit employs to renew and sanctify and save the soul. His book on Affliction, too, I may say was my comforter in my affliction, for when laid aside from public duty for a time, it was the means of imparting to me strong consolation."

It would be altogether superfluous, after the many devotional passages quoted, to introduce more than one additional of the annual reviews of passing years.
31st December, 1857.—"Spent the evening in medita-

tion and prayer, and concluded the year with religious exercises with my family. How much of the Lord's goodness have I experienced during the bygone year! health and comforts uninterrupted; and I trust much enlargement in my soul; though I see the greatest cause of humiliation and sorrow on account of the coldness of my affections, I have been enabled to cast myself on the infinite mercy of God in Christ. This year has been rendered remarkable to me, by my people engaging a young man to assist me in my labours; an affecting intimation that I must ere long give an account of my stewardship. May the Lord bless the connexion which has been formed between me and the young man. May it be for God's glory, the good of the congregation, and my comfort. It is a very kind and considerate step on the part of my beloved flock. So farewell 1857."

SECTION V.—1862 TO 1864

“Thus in the quiet joy of kindly trust,
We bid each parting saint a brief farewell.
Weeping, yet smiling, we commit their dust
To the safe keeping of the silent cell.”

BONAR.

OR five years, a succession of preachers, most of them now in the ministry, besides officiating in Free Trinity Church once each Sabbath, had acted as assistants in its Home Mission. During

that time, Mr. Simpson continued to enjoy good health; the period of weakness was, however, at hand. On the 18th of June, 1862, he was visiting one of his families at an extremity of the town; shortly after returning to his own house, he became the subject of a slight shock of paralysis. Notwithstanding, he preached on Sabbaths as usual; and, in summer, undertook an excursion to the Spittal of Glenshee and Castleton of Braemar. It was not long before he required more frequent help in public duty; and, on the 4th of December, it was resolved, at a meeting of office-bearers, that a colleague and successor should be associated with their minister. The resolution was by him well received. "The proposal of my office-bearers and congregation reminds me very affectingly that my life and ministry are drawing to a close, and that I must soon give an account of my stewardship. O Lord! for Christ's sake, I beseech thee, pardon the many sins of my ministry, and let not my great unworthiness prevent the success of Thine own word. I thank thee for every instance in which Thou hast blessed my ministry, and rendered it effectual for the salvation of sinners. O Lord! this is the highest honour and privilege which Thou canst confer on any of Thy servants; but, ah, my barrenness and unfruitfulness in the work of the Lord! May I henceforth feel, more powerfully than ever I have done, the value of men's souls, and be more earnestly desirous of their salvation. Give wisdom, give grace, in reference to the appointment of a colleague; send one whose ministry Thou wilt abundantly bless, and

with whom I may carry on comfortably and successfully thy work. Direct the office-bearers and congregation in this important crisis. Let there be harmony and peace among them, and may the issue be for Thy glory and the good of all concerned." The General Assembly of the following year cordially approved of the arrangements made. Mr. Gualter of Hawick, who had been harmoniously elected to fill the vacancy, was inducted on 5th May, 1864. Both pastors rejoiced in the prospect of harmonious co-operation; but the union was not to be of long continuance. The sermon which the senior minister preached on the Sabbath before his successor's entering on office, was the last that he addressed to his beloved flock. The text was singularly appropriate—1st Thess. 2: 5—8, "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God *is* witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor *yet* of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."

Mr. Simpson had chosen Cromarty as his summer resort for this year, in order once more to see the town of his early education. He went thither in the middle of June, accompanied by Mrs. Simpson and Mr. Mitchell. He remained there four weeks, with no symptoms of illness, and able every day to take walks about the town, by the seashore, and even uphill

towards the South Tutor. Provost Ross, who had been a school-fellow of his in early years, showed him much kindness. He preached in the Free Church of Cromarty, to relieve its laborious minister, Mr. McEachran, and was distinctly heard in all parts of the large building. It was the will of God he should not again raise his voice in public. As if indicating the bent of his thoughts, his last text was Heb. 4: 9, "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God ;" and he concluded his sermon by repeating the well-known hymn in Ryle's Selection, beginning—

‘Asleep in Jesus ! Blessed sleep !
From which none ever wakes to weep ;
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes !’

On the Sabbath after his return, he was present at Divine Service in his own church ; and all were delighted to see him looking much fresher. The congregation of Trinity about this time gave intimation to their beloved pastor that Mr. Philip, the Artist, was engaged to execute a portrait of him, which they meant to retain within their ecclesiastical buildings. Mr. Philip intended to gratify their wishes early in August. Man could not foresee the sad event which was to hinder the accomplishment of this cherished purpose. On Friday, 22nd July, he went to the manse of his nephew, who had returned with him from the north. He attended public worship in the Free Church of Cluny on the following Sabbath ; spent the rest of the day very much in reading ; and in the evening conducted family worship, retiring to rest in

his usual cheerfulness. On Monday morning at half-past seven o'clock, it was observed that he was unable to raise himself in bed. A second stroke of paralysis had come upon him. Speech failed him. But from Monday to Thursday evening he retained entire consciousness, and knew all the relatives around him, till twenty minutes previous to his death. Portions of Scripture and hymns were from time to time read to him, several of which elicited indications of pleasure. He signified to his medical attendant, Dr. Trail, that he felt no pain. Thus did this devout servant of God fall asleep in Jesus, on the night of Thursday, 28th July, 1864, at five minutes past eleven; in the seventieth year of his age, and forty-second of his ministry.

From the first, Mr. Simpson took a high place among the ministers of Aberdeen as a sound, evangelical, and popular preacher. His congregation, large and influential when he became pastor, continued so to the end of his life. He was well acquainted with the Scriptures and with modern theology, and continued a diligent reader to the last. While not neglecting more profound works, he had much delight in perusing sacred poetry, christian biography, and books on experimental religion. His discourses were carefully prepared, more with a view to edify and impress his flock than to exhibit his own talents or theological acquirements. The gospel trumpet gave no uncertain sound from his lips. While he faithfully exhibited man in his state of nature as fallen and lost, he proclaimed a free and full salvation in Christ as the only Saviour.

While he inculcated with peculiar point and energy all the moral duties, and did not fail to warn sinners of their danger and denounce the terrors of the law against transgressors, the theme on which he most delighted to expatiate was the love of his redeeming God, and the inconceivable blessedness and ineffable glory of the heavenly state. His communion services were always peculiarly solemn and impressive ; and he greatly delighted in the observance of this holy ordinance. His sermons, were characterised with much simplicity and pathos ; and often contained illustrations very happily introduced, and passages of great power and eloquence. His style of composition was always clear—often beautiful : his writing, while chaste and elegant so as not to offend the most fastidious, was plain and intelligible to the meanest capacity.

As a pastor, Mr. Simpson was most conscientious and affectionate. He lived for his people, and was esteemed and beloved by them. In two branches of the pastoral work he specially excelled—the one his dealing with the young, the other his visiting of the sick and dying. Although he had nothing particularly showy about him to attract the young, yet he had such a kindly serious way of speaking to them that he gained their attention and led them to reflect on what he said. In addition to many sermons preached and published on special occasions, he gave to the public a small volume of discourses to the young, which had a large circulation and proved very useful at the time. To the afflicted his visits were frequent and welcome. Many a dying Christian has been greatly solaced, by

his conversation and prayers, and has blessed God for the privilege of having so pious and experienced a minister to speak of Jesus, and to pour the consolations of religion into the soul that had soon to appear in the immediate presence of God.

During his entire ministry, the congregation of Trinity Church was singularly free from heats and jarrings, and exemplified the truth of the Psalmist's words, 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' At the meetings of Session and Deacons' Court, his urbanity, christian prudence, even temper, and conciliatory manner won for him, not only the esteem and respect, but also the affection of his office-bearers.

We have already spoken of two departments that bear strongly on the religious interests of mankind, in which he took a leading part, and rendered valuable services to the Church and the community—the Sabbath question and the cause of Foreign Missions ; he also promoted all proper measures for the suppression of intemperance, and likewise took a lively interest in all the religious and benevolent institutions in the city, and in many of the social questions of the day.

As a member of the Presbytery, Mr. Simpson was always in his place, and exerted himself greatly in carrying on the work of the Church in this part of the land. In any spiritual exercises conducted by the Presbytery, and on any solemn occasion, he was very generally selected, as one well fitted, to lead their devotions. He did this with an unction, a gravity, and a solemnity peculiar to himself. He had a fulness and aptness in

prayer unquestionably arising from an intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures, from a close walk with God, and from a thorough christian experience. Drs. Kidd, Foote, Murray, as also Messrs Lyon, Thorburn, Leith, Parker, Gray, Forbes, Philip, were all contemporaries and fellow-labourers with Mr. Simpson in Aberdeen, and have all been removed to the upper sanctuary. Without saying, ‘We ne’er shall see their like again,’ we may truly say, they rendered eminent service to the Church and to the cause of Christ in their day and generation, and deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance.

“There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown ;
A whole eternity of love
Formed for the saints alone ;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that happier sphere.”—MONTGOMERY.





Part Second.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

THE JOYFUL TIDINGS OF A SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.

LUKE ii. 10, 11.—“And the angel said unto them, Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

SUPPOSE, my friends, that we were at this moment in the condition of those who never heard of a Saviour's name ; that we were oppressed with a load of unpardoned guilt ; that we felt our utter incapacity to make any reparation to God's injured honour ; that our consciences were testifying against us, that we deserved to perish for ever ; that our minds were constantly agitated by a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which we could neither avert nor endure ; and that while we were in this condition, we were commanded to assemble together in this place, in order to hear a message

from that God, whom we had so heniously provoked. If we knew nothing of the nature of that message, ah ! what could we anticipate but a message of wrath, but a denunciation of impending vengeance. Expecting nothing but some awful manifestation of the divine displeasure, with what dismal forebodings would we have come up hither ! with what gloomy countenances would we have taken our seats ! and with what trembling hearts would we have awaited the moment in which we were to receive the dreaded communication ! While in this state of torturing suspense, a brilliant light shines around us, indicating the approach of some celestial being. We are penetrated with horror ; the hair of our heads stands erect, we cover our faces and are afraid to look up. Silence, profound as that of the grave, prevails—not a breath is heard among us, and with intense anxiety we listen to catch the first sound that shall be uttered, and which is to decide our final destiny : when lo ! to our inexpressible surprise and delight, accents of kindness break upon our ears ; and lifting up our eyes, we behold a countenance beaming on us with ineffable benignity and grace, and we hear a voice thus addressing us, Fear not, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. To you is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. What now would be our sensations at this most interesting moment ? Would not our terrors instantly give place to the highest joy, and our despair be exchanged for the most animating hope ? Would not the language of gratitude and praise flow freely from

our lips, and would we not resolve to cherish, as long as we had any being, the remembrance of so great a deliverance ?

And what though such a scene, as that which we have now described, has not been realized in our experience ! Has not such a message, as we have mentioned, actually been sent by the God of heaven to some of our ruined race, accompanied with the intimation, that it was not to be limited to them, but to be extended to all people ? And has the lapse of 1800 years diminished aught of the interest of that message ? Has it now ceased to be glad tidings of great joy ? Shall we listen to it with indifference because it has often been proclaimed in our ears. There is not the least reason why we should not rejoice in it now as greatly as the Shepherds of Bethlehem did, when it was first announced to them. It is still as important and consolatory this moment as it was then, and will continue to be so from generation to generation. That indeed was a most glorious day —a day which shall be held in everlasting remembrance—a day never to be mentioned but with shouts of praise, in which the Eternal Son of God appeared in an incarnate form in this lower world. Never before had the angels witnessed so amazing a spectacle ; never before had they sung so lofty an anthem. And shall we be unaffected while we listen to that transporting announcement which they made to the pious shepherds, and which is still addressed to us in all its extent, and in all its graciousness. Fear not, behold, I bring you good tidings, &c.

In discoursing from these words, it is humbly intended, through divine grace, to shew that the tidings of a Saviour's birth should produce in our minds the greatest joy. And this will appear, if we consider our guilty, helpless, and undone condition by nature, the character of him who has assumed the office of our deliverer, and the exceeding great and precious blessings which he has procured for us.

And first—Let us consider our lost and miserable condition as sinners. Why is it that the news of a Saviour's birth, of a Saviour so transcendently glorious and compassionate, does not excite the most transporting joy in the breasts of all to whom it is announced? Why is it that so many listen with far greater interest to an account of the comparatively trivial occurrences of the day, than to the stupendous fact, that the Eternal Son of the Highest took upon him their nature and was born of a woman, in order that he might deliver them from everlasting perdition, and bestow on them everlasting happiness and glory. Why is it that an event so marvellous, so unprecedented, so unutterably important, engages so little of their attention, and imparts to them far less satisfaction than they derive from receiving information of the success of any of their worldly schemes? If before the incarnation of the Son of God had actually taken place, we had begun to speculate on the probable effects which the intimation of it would have on the minds of men, would we not have very naturally expected that it would be universally productive of the liveliest feelings of wonder, satisfaction, and joy? That the

amazing condescension which it manifested, the infinite love of which it was the expression, and the great deliverance which was to be the result of it, would be contemplated with the deepest interest, and with the most unmixed delight? Could we suppose it possible that any of the human race could hear unmoved the tidings of a Saviour's advent, or fail to welcome him with the strongest demonstrations of joy?

But, is it not the fact that there are multitudes in the world, of whom this may be justly asserted, and who, though greatly disposed to rejoice in worldly prosperity, were never yet conscious of one emotion of heartfelt joy being awakened in their minds by the announcement contained in the words of the text. The angels in heaven reckoned the information which they then communicated to be good tidings of great joy to all people; but *they* have never entertained the same views as these glorious beings; *they* have never seen any cause for the strong language which they then employed; and *they* have never participated in those feelings of rapturous exultation which they then expressed. What is the reason of this most extraordinary insensibility to an event, the most wonderful and important which has ever occurred in the annals of time? It is because they do not feel that they are lost, and that they need a Saviour, that they are sick even to death, and that they need a physician; because they do not feel that they are every moment exposed to the tremendous inflictions of Divine indignation, and that they need a mediator to interpose between them and an offended God. This ignorance

of their real condition is the fatal source of all the indifference which they display ; and till they are made acquainted with their true character, till they perceive the aggravated guilt which they have incurred, and the awful curse of a holy God under which they lie, they will continue unimpressed by the most joyful news that ever reached our sinful world, that "unto us a Child has been born, that unto us a Son has been given, whose name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace."

Let us then take a brief survey of our state and circumstances as sinners against the Majesty of heaven, in order that we may be suitably affected with our wretchedness and misery, and that we may be disposed to account the news of a Saviour's birth to be indeed glad tidings of great joy. Are we not then, by nature and by practice, rebels against the authority and government of Jehovah ? Have we not refused to render him that profound homage, that supreme affection, that cheerful and unreserved obedience, to which he is so justly entitled ? Have we not preferred the gratifications of sense and sin to his favour which is life, and his loving kindness which is better than life ? Have we not been boldly forgetful of Him whom we ought to have had in perpetual and most grateful remembrance ? Have we not, every day of our lives, been enjoying the gifts of his bounty, without offering him any tribute of thanksgiving and praise ? Have we not been grossly abusing the astonishing patience which he has exercised towards us, and going on to sin because his grace abounds ? Have we not disre-

garded his warnings, and slighted his invitations? Have we not stifled the remonstrances of conscience, and wilfully and deliberately indulged in sinful gratifications? Have we not broken, repeatedly and flagrantly broken, the first and great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart," and the second, which is like to it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"? Have we not "cast off fear, and restrained prayer before God"? or "worshipped him with our mouths and honoured him with our lips, while our hearts have been far from Him"? Do not our consciences charge us with these and innumerable other transgressions? And what apology can we plead for all the heinous offences against the Majesty on high, which we have committed? Are the requisitions of his law unreasonable? What, unreasonable! Unreasonable to love with our whole hearts a being of infinite excellence, a being who has given us existence, and who bestows on us every breath we draw and every comfort we enjoy? If that be an unreasonable demand, then it may be justly asserted, that nothing can be reasonably required of us, that we are released from every obligation, and that our own pleasure is the only rule of action which we are bound to observe. But we dare not assert that it is unreasonable, or that it is not in the highest degree reasonable, that we should be actuated by a principle of unbounded affection towards the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and who is possessed in an infinite degree of every glorious and amiable perfection.

But as we have neither loved nor served Him, as we have affected independence of Him, on whom the whole universe every moment depends, as we have presumptuously set up our own will in opposition to His, what is the doom which his righteous law denounced against us? Ah, it is one of the most appalling nature. It includes in it every species of suffering, every form of misery which is most agonizing to the soul. It is the withering malediction of Jehovah. It is the irremediable loss of heavenly bless. It is perpetual exclusion from the society of all holy and happy beings. It is the tormenting sense of the lowest degradation and vileness, and of being objects of unqualified and deserved abhorrence to God and angels, to saints and sinners, yea, to the very devils themselves. It is the gnawing worm of conscience continually corroding the soul. It is the fire kindled by an angry God, which shall never be quenched, but consume its wretched victims with intense and never-ending pains. It is the horrid darkness, the despairing groans, the exquisite remorse, the intolerable anguish of the bottomless pit. In a word, it is the wrath, the overwhelming wrath of the Lord God Omnipotent poured out without mixture, without interruption, and without end, on every impenitent and unbelieving sinner.

This is the sentence of God's holy law which we have incurred, and which we deserve to suffer through all eternity. And we might this day have been summoned to meet together in order to hear it pronounced from the lips of our Judge, and we might have been lifting

up our eyes in the regions of despair, and lamenting our undone condition in the bitterness of our souls.

Now, if we really believed that we are so guilty and so miserable as the Word of God represents us to be, is it possible that we should feel no emotions of joy, when informed that a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, has appeared on earth, in order to deliver us from this most wretched condition, and to confer on us all the high privileges of God's adopted children? Does the convicted and condemned malefactor feel no inclination to rejoice, when he is assured that his life is to be spared? Does the prisoner, long confined in a dreary dungeon, feel no inclination to rejoice, when informed that a ransom has been paid for him, and that he may instantly be restored to liberty? Does the slave, who has for many years groaned under the most cruel and degrading servitude, feel no inclination to rejoice, when told that a kind friend has purchased for him his freedom? But what is deliverance from temporal death, from temporal captivity, and from temporal bondage, compared with that deliverance which Jesus came to effect?—a deliverance from evils of incomparable magnitude and never-ending duration, and accompanied by the bestowment of the opposite blessings. O! surely, if at any time, feelings of joy should be excited in our breasts, it should be when the tidings are proclaimed in our ears, that "unto us has been born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." There is every thing in this announcement, which is calculated to meet our case, however degraded, however wretched, and deplorable. It contains an antidote to every fear,

and a remedy for every disease. It points out to the guilty a certain source of relief; the desponding mourner it cheers; the perplexed it directs in the way to happiness and heaven. We are guilty, exceedingly guilty creatures; and without the divine forgiver we must perish, and that for ever. We have in innumerable instances violated the holy, just, and good law of Jehovah; we have rendered ourselves liable to the tremendous curse which it denounces against every transgression; we are utterly unable to satisfy any one of its demands, but its demands must be satisfied to the full, otherwise we must be everlastinglly undone; the sword of divine justice is every moment pointed at our breasts; and we are suspended over the pit of misery only by the slender thread of life, which in a moment may be cut asunder. But for us who are in a condition so unspeakably miserable and dangerous, a Saviour has been born, whose compassion is boundless, whose atoning sacrifice is infinitely valuable, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. And for his sake a free, a complete, and an unalterable forgiveness is offered to us and pressed upon our acceptance. And we are assured that though our transgressions were innumerable as the sands upon the sea shore, though they were red as scarlet or as crimson, yet through the Lord Jesus they may all be abundantly pardoned. His name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, by bearing them in his own body on the tree. And there is not an individual now present, however vile, on whom he is not willing to confer this exceedingly great and precious blessing. His affect-

ing language to them is, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live ; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die ?" "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." What soul-cheering declarations are these ! Surely we should reckon them glad tidings of great joy. What a healing balm they should prove to our wounded spirits ! how they should dispel our fears and excite our hopes ! how they should remove our oppressive burden of guilt, and give rest to our agitated minds !

And when this free offer of pardon, proclaimed in the gospel, is heard and believed, O what sweet peace it diffuses through the anxious troubled mind ! What strong consolations it affords to the most fearful and dejected sinner. Though formerly almost overwhelmed with a sense of guilt, though tossed about like the ocean in a tempest, this gives immediate relief, and renders him calm and tranquil. Now God is pacified towards him for all that he has done, through the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer. Now he can say, with joyful heart, "O Lord, I will praise thee : though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away." Now he enjoys the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Now he enjoys peace with God, the peace with which he was formerly unacquainted, and which passeth all understanding. Now God is his father and his friend, and will continue to be so for ever without variableness or shadow of turning. And O what a glorious, soul-

satisfying relation is this ! How unspeakably happy must that man be, to whom God reveals himself under the endearing character of his father and his God ! What an amazing privilege for a poor sinful creature to contemplate all the transcendently glorious perfections of the Most High, and to say, ‘ This God is my God for ever and ever ; he will be my guide even until death ? ’ What is there in the universe that can impart to the soul such transporting joy as this ?

Is there any dejected, broken-hearted sinner here this day—any who trembles when he thinks of the number and the aggravations of his transgressions, and is desirous above all things of obtaining forgiveness ? Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. I tell you of a Saviour, whom God himself has provided, and who is possessed of every qualification which is necessary to remove your fears and excite your hopes—a Saviour, who delights in the exercise of mercy, and is displeased when the riches and extent of His mercy are called in question. I exhibit to you a Saviour, who is willing to receive you just as you are, and to bestow upon you at this moment the pardon of all your sins. Do you believe that He is so generous as He represents Himself to be ? Why then do you not come to Him, that you may have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins ?

But we need not only the pardon of our sins, but also a justifying righteousness, which we can plead before God as the ground of our acceptance and eternal salvation. God has declared His unalterable determination to magnify His law, and make it hon-

urable. Not only must the penalty it threatened be endured, but also the obedience which it demands be performed, before any sinner can be restored to His favour, or be invested with a title to everlasting life. By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified ; but neither shall any one be justified while the deeds of the law are unfulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one iota of the curse which it denounces shall ever be annulled, nor shall one iota of that perfect conformity to its precepts which it requires, be ever abrogated. None shall ever enter into heaven, till that vast debt which he owes to the justice of God be fully paid, and till that obedience which is due to the divine law be completely performed. The holiness and the truth of Jehovah must shine forth with untarnished glory, before any of his sinful creatures can enjoy the smiles of His approbation. If the Lord Jesus had done nothing more for us than endured the curse of the law in our stead, that would indeed have procured us exemption from the punishment which our sins had merited, but it would have given us no right to the boundless felicity of heaven. We would have still been in the condition of criminals, who are pardoned, but not restored to the favour of their offended Sovereign. But the Lord Jesus has not left his work so incomplete. No. He has in our room and stead obeyed His Father's law—obeyed it to the utmost extent of its high demands—obeyed it during the whole period of His humiliation without the slightest approach to a defeat, and by the transcendent dignity of His person He conferred on

it a degree of honour, which it could never have derived from the uninterrupted obedience either of men or of angels. Hence God declared Him by a voice from heaven, ‘to be His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased;’ for He was abundantly possessed of every qualification which was requisite to secure the glory of God, and the peace and happiness of mankind. Thus, He “is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” And by Him, “all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.” And hence the Apostle Paul, who, in the days of his ignorance and unbelief, went about to establish his own righteousness, declared that “he thought all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord.”

Are there then any now present, who are sensible that their religious services, and all their attempts to obey the law of God, are exceedingly imperfect, polluted with sin, and altogether incapable of pacifying their consciences? Are there any who are desirous above all things of having a solid foundation of hope towards God, a foundation on which they may build an edifice for eternity, which the storms of divine wrath shall never assail, which Satan can never shake, and which the swellings of Jordan shall never sweep away? Suffer me to proclaim in your ears good tidings of great joy. A Saviour is presented to your view in the gospel, who has fulfilled all righteousness, who, acting as your substitute, according to God’s own appointment, has rendered an obedience to the divine

law, which pours on it a flood of brightest glory, which is so infinitely valuable as to purchase eternal bliss for the most rebellious sinners, and which is so inconceivably acceptable to God, that for its sake He is willing to receive the most unworthy and guilty of mankind into His favour, into His family, into His heavenly kingdom. And this righteousness, this glorious and divine righteousness of the Redeemer, is brought near to you this day ; and it is offered to you without money and without price. By the disobedience of one you were constituted sinners ; but by the obedience of one you may be constituted righteous, and may receive a title to all the precious and everlasting blessings which that obedience has purchased. Interested in that righteousness which he has wrought out, you can have nothing to fear, but everything to hope for from the God of heaven. By receiving this righteousness, and putting it on you as a robe, you glorify God in the highest degree which it is possible for you to do, and you even engage His justice and His truth to bestow upon you eternal life and glory. You thus acknowledge, in the most satisfactory manner, that the doom which His holy law denounces against you is most just, and that were it executed upon you in all its rigour, you would have no right to complain. You thankfully acquiesce in that wonderful method of salvation, which His infinite wisdom has devised, and in which “mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other;” and you rely on that work of the Redeemer, which He regards with unbounded complacencny and delight, as having most gloriously manifested

all the perfections of His character, and most completely vindicated the honour of His government.

How greatly then should you rejoice in the righteousness of the incarnate God, "which is unto all, and upon all them that believe!" O how securely may you rest on it in life, how confidently may you triumph in it in death, and how certainly will it procure you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your God and Saviour!

I have to observe further, that we need not only the pardon of our sins, and a justifying righteousness, but also the renewal of our nature, and strength to overcome all the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to discharge all the duties which God has commanded. We are depraved creatures, and must be made holy before we can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven; the love of God must reign supremely in our hearts; we must be constantly endeavouring to do those things which are pleasing to Him; we must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; we must be spiritually-minded which is life and peace, and we must be growing in meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. But there is within us an evil heart of unbelief, which is ever prompting us to depart from the living God; we are naturally averse to spiritual exercises; we are strongly attached to the pleasures of sin; and we are surrounded by enemies who are continually on the watch to deceive and ruin us. How can such corrupt and feeble beings hope to triumph over all this formidable opposition, and to be finally received into those man-

sions of unsullied purity, into which nothing that defileth can ever enter? Will the strength of our own resolution, and the energy of our own minds, be sufficient for this purpose? Ah! no. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool, and his folly will be manifested by his sustaining a signal and disgraceful defeat. To those, however, who are deeply depressed with this view of their own exceeding sinfulness, and who tremble at the thought of the difficulties with which they have to contend, and the enemies whom they have to encounter, I would announce good tidings of great joy. The Saviour who has come for your deliverance, and in whom you have believed, is almighty and He has promised to make His grace sufficient for you, and to perfect His strength in your weakness. By the power of His Spirit, He will subdue all your corruptions, implant and strengthen within you every holy principle, and every devout affection, and enable you to glorify Him in your bodies and your spirits which are his. To all His people He is a very present help in every time of need. He knows all their wants, and can supply them—all their fears, and can remove them. They may be reduced to great perplexity and distress, but He will never leave them nor forsake them. "Fear thou not," says He to them in the time of their deepest affliction, "for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Should you not then rejoice in such encouraging declarations? Should they not dispel all your gloomy apprehensions, and

dispose you to place a firm and a cheerful confidence on His gracious promises? He who has begun the good work in your souls, will assuredly carry it on till you are rendered perfect in holiness, and perfectly meet for His heavenly kingdom.

And this suggests to me the last remark which I intend to make, namely, that we are naturally afraid of death, and that we need to be delivered from those alarming fears which it so justly excites in the breasts of the guilty. Death is the last and the most tremendous evil to which we are exposed in this lower world. The alarming symptoms by which it is preceded, the exquisite pangs with which it is attended, and the judgment by which it is to be followed, all combine to array it in terrors which appal the stoutest heart and make the most daring sinner tremble. However great may be the horrors and sufferings of this present time, we know their extent, and continually cherish the hope of enjoying better days; but the miseries to be endured in a future world are invested with inconceivable horrors, and never have an end. Hence death is justly dreaded as the greatest calamity that can befall us here below; and the more correctly we are acquainted with its consequences, the more we are afraid of its approach. Death dissolves the connection between our souls and our bodies; death terminates the short period allotted to us to prepare for an everlasting state; death brings our disembodied spirits into the immediate presence of our heart-searching and almighty Judge, and death seals our character and our condition for eternity. Where,

then, is the unpardoned sinner who can, without consternation and dismay, think seriously of his departure from this world and his appearance at the bar of heaven? Who that knows anything of the immaculate purity of Jehovah, of His unalterable abhorrence of sin, and of His awful threatenings which He has denounced against all the impenitent workers of iniquity, but must shudder at the thought of being summoned before Him while in a state of impenitence and pollution? Ah, with what confusion must he be covered! with what painful feelings must he be agonised! with what frightful apprehensions must he be overwhelmed! Defiled, loathsome, abominable, what shall he answer to a God of infinite holiness? and what must he expect from a God of unbending justice? If he attempted to justify himself, his own mouth would condemn him. If he attempted to escape the punishment which He was about to inflict on him, he would feel, as it were, the weight of a mountain pressing upon his breast, and rendering him incapable of the slightest movement. The sentence of everlasting perdition he must hear, and its full execution he must endure. To the gloomy abodes of anguish and despair he must be consigned, and there must he remain as long as there is a God who hates sin, and has power to punish it.

Well, then, may the prospect of death excite the deepest anxiety and alarm in the heart of the impenitent sinner; well may he tremble on the brink of the grave. And might not this have been the condition of us all?—might we not all have arrived at the close

of life without being cheered by one ray of hope?—might we not all have been doomed to die under the heavy curse of God's violated law, and anticipating nothing but everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power? Yes; had the Majesty of Heaven dealt with us according to our deserts, this would have been our wretched condition, and we would have been looking forward to the period of our death with unmixed and inexpressible horror, as to the period when the just indignation of an offended and omnipotent God would be poured out upon us to the uttermost. But good tidings of great joy have reached our ears. A Saviour has been born, and a Saviour has died for us, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. The Lord Jesus has completely vanquished the king of terrors by submitting to his stroke, and becoming for a short time his victim. By making an atonement for sin, He has stripped him of those weapons which rendered him so formidable, and which enabled him to inflict wounds that could never be cured. Having discharged all his poisoned arrows into the heart of the Redeemer, death has not one now to throw at his believing people. Nay, instead of being their unrelenting foe, He has become their kind friend; for He delivers them from all their pains, and griefs, and fears, and introduces their emancipated spirits into the regions of perfect purity and unbounded bliss. How greatly, then, should we rejoice in that

Saviour, through whom we may triumph over that grim messenger of the tomb, whose summons is so terrible to the great body of mankind. How earnestly should we apply to Him who alone can bestow on us the most precious blessing! how firmly should we rely on the infinite merits of the sacrifice which He offered on the cross to His heavenly Father! and how willingly should we express our ardent gratitude to Him who so cheerfully died that we might live for ever! Let us contemplate the aged and venerable Simeon holding the divine Saviour in his arms, and saying, "Now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation;" and from this interesting spectacle let us learn how calmly and how joyfully the confirmed believer in Jesus can leave this world.

And is it not most consoling to know that the same rich consolations which cheered this eminent saint are also freely offered to us, and that through faith in the same Saviour we also may depart in peace. And oh, when we have arrived at the last stage of our earthly pilgrimage, when we bid a final adieu to every earthly object and every earthly concern, when eternity, with all its rapturous scenes of felicity and joy, presents itself to our ravished eyes, will we not reckon the Gospel, which first brought peace and comfort to our hearts, and which supports us amidst the agonies of expiring nature, to be indeed glad tidings of great joy? And when the morning of the resurrection has dawned, and our pure spirits have been united to our glorified bodies, shall we not, while beholding our

exalted Lord; and exclaiming, “O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory”? also think of that auspicious day when He first appeared as a feeble babe in a manger at Bethlehem, and when the heavenly messenger thus, addressed the wondering and terrified shepherds—“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”

S E R M O N I I.

THE CONSOLATORY POWER OF JESUS' NAME.

SONG OF SOLOMON, i. 3.— . . . “Thy name *is as* ointment poured forth.”

HE glory and loveliness of Emmanuel are described in Scripture by a variety of the most expressive figures; and the sacred writers exhaust all the powers of human thought and language, in endeavouring to represent to us His incomparable excellence. In this Song of Solomon, according to the opinion of the most judicious interpreters, the Church on the one hand contemplates with rapture the ineffable beauty of her beloved Lord, and expressed her feelings towards Him with the most impassioned fervour; while He on the other views with divine complacency His own image in his spouse, and recounts with delight all the lovely graces with which she is adorned.

This very remarkable composition begins abruptly with the utterance of a very intense desire, on the part of the Church, to be favoured with the most endearing tokens of a Saviour's love. His glory suddenly bursting upon her view, and captivated with his loveliness, she exclaims in language to which the spiritual mind will give its proper meaning, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better than wine," more cheering and animating to the soul than the most valued earthly cordials. "Because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth." Christ drawing near at the earnest request of his spouse, she perceives a most delicious fragrance flowing from his richly perfumed garments, which she finds to be inexpressibly refreshing, and which disposed her to say, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth;" such precious ointment as was poured on the head of Aaron, when he was consecrated to the high priesthood, and which diffused around him the most delightful odour. Perfumes of the richest kind were highly valued and frequently used in eastern countries; and when a sovereign made his appearance on public occasions, his robes emitted a most fragrant odour, which afforded a most delightful sensation to all within the sphere of its influence. It is with great force and signification, therefore, that the Church here says of Christ, "His name is as ointment poured forth."

By the *name* of Jesus we are to understand *Himself*, in all those interesting views in which he is presented to us in the Scriptures of truth; and which alone are

capable of imparting peace to the guilty, strength to the weak, consolation to the afflicted, and hope to the dying. His name denotes His glorious person as God manifest in the flesh, possessing all the attributes of Deity, and all the qualities of a pure and perfect humanity, as being at once the mighty God and the man Christ Jesus. His name includes His love, His generous, disinterested, intense, inextinguishable, and everlasting love towards his people, which prompted Him to give Himself for them an offering and a sacrifice to God, and to bear their sins in His own body on the tree. His name signifies His grace, which disposes Him to confer the most precious spiritual blessings on the most unworthy and guilty, who are willing to receive them. His name comprehends His compassion, which prompts Him to sympathise most tenderly with his people in their sufferings and afflictions, and to give them all necessary relief. His name denotes His power, by which He is enabled to subdue all their corruptions, to vanquish all their enemies, and to keep them through faith unto salvation. And by His name we may understand His faithfulness, by which the fulfilment of all His promises is infallibly secured to them in time and through eternity. How justly then may it be affirmed, that His name in all these respects is as ointment poured forth—that as a costly and fragrant perfume, when the vessel in which it is contained is broken, fills the house with its odour, and produces a delightful sensation on all who are within its reach, so, the infinite excellencies of the Lord Jesus, when exhibited to the view of His people,

communicate inexpressible satisfaction and comfort to their souls ! It is my intention, in humble dependence on divine grace, to endeavour to illustrate this idea under the following particulars :—

1st. The name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth, because it gives peace to the troubled conscience. When a sense of guilt, aggravated guilt, is produced in the soul of the sinner ; when the awful majesty, the spotless purity, the inflexible justice, the almighty power of the God whom he has offended, are presented clearly to his view ; and when he shudders at the thought of the tremendous consequences of his transgressions, what is it that can calm his agitated mind ? What can effectually dispel his alarming apprehensions ? Various expedients man's boasted wisdom has devised for this purpose, but to the man who has been truly awakened to a sense of his danger, they give no real and enduring relief. Some prophecy smooth things to him, and assure him that his state is not nearly so bad as he supposes ; that his fears are groundless ; that his sins are not so great, nor the judgments of God so much to be dreaded as he imagines. And even admitting that he may have done many things which are very wrong, they tell him that God will not enter into very strict judgment with such a frail and erring creature as he, and that, at all events, repentance and amendment will secure his favour. Others advise him to do as well as he can in future, and trust in Christ to make up his deficiencies. By employing such remedies as these, some are again lulled to sleep, and their last end becomes worse than

their first. But the conscience of the man who has been thoroughly convinced of sin, cannot be thus pacified ; his wound is too deep to be thus healed.

But when despairing of relief from every other source, the name of Jesus has been proclaimed in his ears ; when His divine dignity, His deep humiliation, His precious blood, His glorious righteousness, His gracious invitations have been made known to him ; all his fears have been dispelled, and being justified by faith, he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. And then he has found the name of Jesus to be indeed as ointment poured forth ; for when trembling at the bar of divine justice, and ready to perish, it imparted to him a sense of reconciliation with God, and caused him to experience the blessedness of the man whose iniquity is forgiven and whose sin is covered. And may I not appeal to the experience of some now present for the truth of what has just been stated. Can you not recollect a period when your sins were set in order before you, when you felt what a fearful thing it was to fall into the hands of the living God, and when all your self-righteous methods of obtaining relief utterly failed ? And can you not recall to your minds the delightful sensations you experienced, when the name of Jesus, in which you were enabled to believe, produced the sweetest tranquillity in your anxious troubled minds, and disposed you to say, "O Lord, I will praise Thee, for though Thou was angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." And could you not then cordially unite with the spouse in saying,

2. The name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth, because it inspires the believer with courage and vigour in the path of duty. When he contemplates the number, and the power, and the malignity of his spiritual adversaries, his heart is ready to faint and his hands to hang down. He feels that he has no might at all against the great company that is arrayed against him, and that if he were to attempt to meet them in his own strength, he would certainly be subjected to a most mortifying defeat. But when he is ready to yield to discouragement, the name of Jesus invigorates his drooping spirits—the name of Him who encountered and vanquished all the enemies of his salvation, and who has pledged His word that He will bruise Satan under the feet of his people shortly ; that sin shall not have dominion over him, for he is not under the law but under grace, and that through faith he shall overcome the world. In His name, therefore, he sets up his banners ; in His name he goes forth to fight the good fight of faith, and to perform every service required of him. What was it that animated the stripling David to encounter the gigantic Philistine Goliath ? It was confidence in the name of his God and Saviour, without which he would have shrunk from so unequal a contest. "Thou comest against me," said he to his haughty foe, "with sword and shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord God of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." What was it that inspired Asa with courage to encounter the huge host of Zerah the Ethiopian ? It was confidence in the name

of the Lord. "Asa," we are told, "cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing to Thee to help with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude." And what was it that animated the mind of the Apostle Paul when there was given to him a thorn in the flesh, and when a messenger was sent from Satan to buffet him? It was confidence in the name of his Lord, whose grace he was assured would be sufficient for him, and whose strength would be perfected in his weakness. And what but the same glorious name has encouraged the saints and martyrs of Jesus in every age when summoned to the discharge of the most difficult and self-denying duties? While deeply conscious of their utter insufficiency to do anything as of themselves, they have undertaken the most laborious and painful services in the name of the Lord Jesus, implicitly and confidently depending on the grace which he has promised to communicate. And when flesh and blood have been ready to shrink and to yield to heartless despondency, the name of Jesus has been as ointment poured forth; and their strength being thus renewed, they run in the path of God's commandments and are not weary, they walk and are not faint.

3. The name of Jesus is an ointment poured forth, because it imparts strong consolation to the believer in the time of trial. Many are the crosses, disappointments, bereavements, sufferings, and sorrows, to which the people of God are subjected in this vale of tears. Often are their most pleasing prospects

blasted, their tenderest feelings lacerated, and their most cherished plans defeated. Often are they in heaviness through manifold temptations; without are fightings, within are fears. Often are they called to resign those objects which they are most anxious to retain, to endure those sufferings which they are most desirous to avoid, and to weep over those from whom they expected the greatest comfort.

But how sweet to them in such circumstances is the name of Jesus! How consoling to them to meditate on the depth of self-abasement to which He stooped, and the intensity of those agonies which He endured for their sakes! How refreshing to remember that He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief! How cheering to be assured that He is not a high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of their infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as they are, yet without sin; that, having been himself tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted! How soothing his voice, "Let not your heart be troubled," &c. (John xiv. 1—3); "Peace I leave with you," &c. (John xiv. 27); "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John xvi. 33).

It was such views of the Saviour as these, that enabled the apostles to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus; that enabled Paul to reckon the sufferings of this present time unworthy to be compared with the glory that was to be revealed in him, and to say in the prospect of bonds imprisonment and death, "None of these

things move me." And it is the same views of the grace, compassion, and power of Jesus, which still console the minds of believers under all the afflictions to which they are subjected. They know that it is in love that He chastens them, and that "though now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." How much soever, therefore, their spirits may be depressed under the manifold trials with which they are visited, there is virtue in the name of Jesus to revive and quicken them, and even to render them joyful in the midst of sorrow. Afflicted Christian, has it not been so with you? Has not the name of Jesus been to you as ointment poured forth, refreshing and comforting your souls in the period of deep dejection? Have you not felt it to be a healing balm to your wounded spirits? And when every other method of imparting consolation has failed, has not the name of Jesus, as an infinitely gracious and compassionate Saviour, dispelled the dark cloud which had gathered around you, and disposed you to say with meek acquiescence, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

4. The name of Jesus communicates the sweetest peace to his believing people in the hour of death. In that most solemn and trying season, when heart and flesh fail, O, how inexpressibly precious is that name! What can *riches* do for the dying man? They

may surround him with splendour, and procure him the assistance of the ablest physicians ; but they cannot minister to a mind diseased ; they cannot remove nor alleviate the pangs of guilt ; they cannot bribe the King of terrors, nor disarm him of his fearful sting. And what can the *honours* of this world do for the dying man ? Though the most brilliant crown which ever monarch wore, were then put upon his head ; though the most glorious sceptre that ever monarch wielded, were then put into his hand ; and though he were clothed with the most magnificent robes with which ever monarch was adorned, could they afford him any solid satisfaction ? could they brighten his languid eye, or cheer his trembling spirit ? Ah no ! They would increase and aggravate rather than soothe the bitterness of his sorrow. And what can the *pleasures* of the world do for the dying man ? What sumptuous entertainments and gay society then ? What the theatre and the ball room then ? What the card party and the gaming table then ? If any attempt were made to dispel the gloom that was gathering around him, by having recourse to such things as these, would it not be considered the most insulting mockery of his woe ? And what can a man's own righteousness do for him then ? Ah ! unless fatally blinded, he must perceive that he cannot appear in it before God with the least hope of acceptance ; he must be convinced that, when weighed in the balances of divine justice, he would be found wanting. How much soever these various things may be sought after and valued in life, they will prove utterly worthless, and

incapable of imparting the least consolation in the hour of death.

But the name of Jesus, who encountered the last enemy, and triumphed over him gloriously—the name of Jesus, who wrought out a perfect righteousness on behalf of all who believe in Him, imparts a heavenly consolation to the departing spirit. It is true the believer must submit to the stroke of death as well as others; but he comes to *him*, not with the frowning terrific visage of the King of terrors, but with the mild aspect of a messenger sent by his heavenly Father to call him home. He, too, must resign all earthly enjoyments; but from the name of Jesus, in whom he trusts, he derives a peace which the world cannot give, and which it cannot take away. He ceases from all the employments in which he was engaged; he bids adieu to the friends whom he most tenderly loved; he leaves behind him all the property which he may have possessed; but he is not destitute of consolation. Jesus is his all, and his all goes with him. And in the hour of his greatest languor and suffering, when nothing else can give the least relief, the name of Jesus is as ointment poured forth, the fragrance of which imparts to him the sweetest refreshment. There is in that name, when believed in with the whole heart, a sovereign, an almighty efficacy, by which his people are supported, and rendered fearless of evil, even when they are passing through the valley and shadow of death. And O how blessed are they to whom that name is now precious! Never will it lose any of its sweetness, or of its powerful influence. Relying on

that name, they can fearlessly go forth to meet every enemy, and to endure every trial. Relying on that name, they may peacefully close their eyes on this world, and all that it contains. And relying on that name, they may, with the full assurance of hope, enter into an everlasting state.

And this leads me to remark,—

5. That the name of Jesus is an ointment poured forth, because it animates the believer with the prospect of eternal glory. To appear before a holy and a heart-searching God in judgment; to give account to Him of the deeds done in the body; to hear the sentence by which our condition must be unalterably and for ever determined! What considerations can be more solemn? And what more fitted to excite the anxious inquiry—How shall we stand before this holy Lord God? What shall inspire our souls with confidence in such a presence? What shall fill us with the most transporting joy even on such an occasion? Can the wisdom of the wise discover it? Can the wealth of the opulent purchase it? Can the power of the mighty bestow it? We are standing at the tribunal of heaven, and we must have a righteousness, which will answer all the demands of God's broken law. Who can furnish it? Any of our fellow-creatures? We are beyond the reach of their help, even though they had the power to help us; put they have no righteousness of their own, and cannot bestow any upon us. Any of the angels in heaven? They have indeed a righteousness of their own, but none which is not absolutely necessary for themselves, and none, therefore, which they can communicate to others.

But in the Lord Jesus, His people have a righteousness which is perfect and divine—a righteousness which has conferred infinite honour on God's holy law—a righteousness which renders it a just thing in Him to bestow eternal life on every true believer. This righteousness having become theirs by faith, they possess a valid title to the heavenly inheritance. They, therefore, appear before God clothed with a more glorious robe of righteousness, than that with which even Adam was adorned, when he proceeded from the hands of his Maker. They can, therefore, look forward to the time of their appearance before God in judgment with well-founded hope. The name of Jesus dispels all their fears, for they are in a state of union with Him, in whom the Father is ever well-pleased. In the name of Jesus they now draw near to a throne of grace, and in the same name they shall be enabled to stand with confidence before a throne of judgment. Conscience may often accuse, and the heart misgive, and Satan assault, and death assume a threatening aspect, and eternity appear awful; and many fears may arise, and many painful conflicts may be endured; but the name of Jesus proves like ointment poured forth, invigorating the fainting spirit, and animating it with the bright prospect of eternal glory. Jesus has gone before His people to prepare mansions for them in His Father's house, and His prayer in their behalf is, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory ;" and therefore, when they arrive at heaven's gates, His name will be their passport into the realms

of glory ; and His name will be the theme of their loftiest anthems throughout all eternity. "How sweet," then, to adopt the words of the well-known hymn :—

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear !
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
And drives away his fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole,
And calms the troubled breast ;
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary rest.

Dear name ! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place ;
My never-failing treasury fill'd
With boundless stores of grace.

Yes, Thou art precious to my soul,
My transport and my trust ;
Jewels to Thee are guady toys,
And gold is sordid dust.

Thy grace still dwells upon my heart,
And sheds its fragrance there ;
The noblest balm of all its wounds,
The cordial of its care.

Jesus ! my Shepherd, Husband, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King ;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought ;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I'll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim,
With every fleeting breath ;
And may the music of Thy Name,
Refresh my soul in death.

SERMON III.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF THE REDEEMER'S KINGDOM
ON EARTH.

PSALM lxxii. 16, 17.—“There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon : and *they* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. His name shall endure for ever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun ; and *men* shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed.”

 O the true believer it is a mournful spectacle to see a whole world lying in wickedness, ignorant of the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, sunk into the most degrading superstition, and abandoned to the most abominable idolatry. When he thinks of the value of only one immortal spirit, incomparably more precious than the world and all that it contains, he is almost overwhelmed with the consideration, that countless myriads of such souls have already perished in their sins, are at this present moment perishing, and if not made acquainted with the way of salvation, will continue to perish. Surveying the many successive generations that have already entered upon a dark and a miserable eternity, the vast numbers that are now treading their steps, and who are soon to be subjected to the same awful doom, his soul is penetrated with grief and anxiety, and the intense desire is produced within him that Satan's horrid reign were terminated, and that his blinded and wretched slaves were enlightened and blessed by the gospel of Christ.

In such a state of mind, his only source of consolation is the prospect presented to him in the Scriptures, of the final and glorious triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth. The Gentile nations are not always to continue in their present gloomy and miserable condition. The Sun of righteousness is yet to rise with the most resplendent lustre on those who are now sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, and the most precious privileges of God's people are yet to be enjoyed by those who are far from Him, and utterly alienated from Him in their minds by wicked works. The power of the wicked one is yet to be restrained ; peace and love are yet universally to prevail ; the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and He is to reign for ever and ever. And however unpromising appearances may now be ; however improbable that so happy a change shall take place in the state of mankind ; we may be absolutely certain that in due time it will be effected, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." In the psalm a portion of which we have now read, we have a most glowing and animated description of the progress, the extent, the glory, and the blessedness of Messiah's kingdom. It is entitled a Psalm for Solomon ; but a greater far than Solomon is its principal subject, even He, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The sacred writer soon passes from the type to proclaim the glory of the great Anti-type ; and surely a more transporting description than that which he here gives us of the benign effects of His reign, it is impossible to conceive, verses 6—15,

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass," &c. But how, and by what means, it may be asked, was this most amazing work to be accomplished? Not suddenly, but gradually, as the corn grows from the seed; not by the wisdom, the learning, and the power of men, but by the omnipotent agency of God, accompanying the word of divine truth. "There shall," says the Psalmist, "be a handful of corn in the earth upon the tops of the mountains;" and that handful of corn shall multiply till it overspread the whole world; "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon," &c.

In this passage the kingdom of Christ is represented 1st. As arising from small beginnings: 2nd. As making progress in the most unfavourable and unpropitious circumstances: 3rd. As destined to comprehend the whole human race: And 4th. To endure for ever. To these topics, it is my intention, in humble dependence on the grace of the Holy Spirit, to direct your attention.

1st, then, the kingdom of Christ is represented in this text as arising from small beginnings. It is compared to a handful of seed corn in the earth; and the comparison is exceedingly just and beautiful. Corn is the staff of life; without it men would soon suffer all the horrors of famine. And if there were only one handful of this precious commodity upon the earth, from which a crop was to arise sufficient to supply the wants of all its families, how precious would that handful appear! how carefully would we commit it to the soil and how eagerly would we watch its progress from the blade to the ear, and then to the full corn in

the ear ! The gospel of Christ is that handful of corn, and on it depends entirely the everlasting happiness of the whole human race. To sow that handful of corn the divine Redeemer appeared upon the earth ; and O how mean and humble were the circumstances in which He first presented Himself to the view of mankind, born in a stable and laid in a manger, because there was no room for Him in the inn ! Who could have supposed that the Babe who was lying there, was one who was yet to be universally acknowledged, adored, and loved as the only Saviour of guilty men ; that He was to convert this waste howling wilderness into a paradise, the very garden of the Lord ; and that He was to sway his righteous and peaceful sceptre over all tribes, and tongues, and nations, and languages ? Yes, but true it is, that within that lowly manger is contained God's chief mercy to a ruined world ; and however obscure and despised He may now be, He is yet with divine liberality to scatter blessings of inestimable value among the whole human race, and to crown with eternal glory a great multitude that no man can number. The sun in the firmament does not all at once pour on us the full blaze of his meridian splendour, but begins with a few faint streaks of light in the horizon, and gradually increases his lustre, till he arrives at his greatest elevation ; and so the Lord Jesus, who styles Himself the Light of the world, did not burst upon the earth in all the effulgence of His glory, but by slow and imperceptible degrees poured his radiancy upon the dark souls of men. On various occasions He himself presented

his kingdom to us in this point of view. Thus, He compares it to a little leaven hid in three measures of meal, which gradually pervaded the whole mass ; and to a grain of mustard seed, which when sown is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown becometh a great tree, and the fowls of the air lodge in the branches of it.

2. The kingdom of Christ is represented in this passage as making progress in the most unfavourable and unpropitious circumstances. The handful of corn is here said to be sown on the top of the mountains, bleak, rocky, and barren, where no crop could reasonably be expected. And yet there it takes root, there it grows, and there the fruit of it waves like the lofty and prolific cedars of Lebanon. How striking an emblem of the seed of divine truth deposited in the hearts of sinners, which are as hard as the adamantine rock, and barren as the sandy desert ! Who would expect corn to grow on the tops of the mountains where there is scarcely any soil, and where, if it should spring up, it must soon wither for lack of moisture, or be swept away by the furious storms, that prevail so often in these lofty eminences ? Still more improbable it must have appeared that the seed of the gospel should take root in the soil of the human heart, and bring forth fruit abundantly. Who could have supposed that a handful of poor fishermen and publicans going forth at the command of one who had been crucified by the Roman government, without human learning, or wealth, or eloquence, or influence, or power, and employing no other weapons but preaching

the doctrine of Christ crucified, should have overthrown in so many instances the long established altars of paganism, and the fondly cherished systems of philosophers, and planted Christian Churches in the most depraved and idolatrous cities of the Roman empire? How blind were the understandings, how hardened the hearts, how inveterate the prejudices of their countrymen the Jews! and yet thousands even of them were subdued by the power of divine truth. How gross the ignorance, how awful the depravity of the Gentiles! and yet the gospel preached by the apostles and disciples of our Lord, made the most wonderful progress among them, and at length obtained a complete triumph over all the imaginary gods of the heathen. What but the resistless power of Jehovah, accompanying the preaching of the gospel could have achieved so signal victories over all the pride of philosophers, all the malignant hatred of bigoted priests, all the despotic authority of tyrannical princes, and all the violence of an infuriated populace. To those who were ignorant of the secret of its power, how utterly unaccountable it must have appeared, that the religion of the Cross, proclaimed by a few unlearned and despised Jews, should in defiance of all the determined opposition with which it had to contend, have made so rapid progress among all classes of men, and at length ascended the throne of the Cæsars. They knew not that it was the power of God, and the wisdom of God to them that believed; they knew not that a divine power accompanied it, which procured for it an entrance into the darkest understanding, and

which rendered it victorious over the hardest hearts. The handful of corn was sown on the tops of the mountains, but the rugged and barren rocks were converted into fruitful soil ; the seed of divine truth was cast upon hard and stony hearts, but they were changed by the Holy Spirit, and became hearts of flesh, and produced a rich harvest of those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

After this great revolution in the state of the moral world had been accomplished, the Church of Christ gradually declined from its purity, lost sight of the great doctrines of the gospel, and continued for many centuries in a state of grossest ignorance, and the most debasing superstition. The agency of God's Holy Spirit was suspended, and the seed of divine truth lay buried and dormant under a mass of the most grievous errors, and the most pompous, but unmeaning, rites and ceremonies. Then was Luther raised up by the Great Head of the Church, and sent forth with his handful of corn to sow on the top of the mountains. How hopeless, apparently, the enterprise ! How could it be expected that a poor despised monk should be able successfully to contend with all the wealth and power and influence of the Roman pontiff ; that he should detach one kingdom after another from his grasp ; that crowds of followers, numerous as blades of grass upon the ground, should own him as a teacher sent from God, and welcome the truth from his lips ? But all this really happened. With no other weapons but his tongue and his pen ; with no

other defence but the invisible protection of his God, he encountered the man of sin in all the plenitude of his power, and inflicted a wound on this great Goliath, from which he is never to recover. The word of the Lord, which he preached, had free course, and was glorified; nation after nation emerged from the darkness in which they were enveloped, and threw off the galling chains by which they were enslaved. And the feeble monk, who, unaided and alone, had ventured to cast his handful of precious seed upon the mountain tops of Popery, returned again in triumph, bringing his sheaves with him.

And may we not confidently anticipate similar, and still greater results from the labours of missionaries in the present day, who have lately gone forth to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ? They are indeed as yet few in number; and when we compare them with the countless multitude of Satan's subjects, we are very apt to yield to desponding thoughts, and to say, "What are they among so many?" But should we not be encouraged and animated by the consideration, that they are the leaven hid in the meal, the grain of mustard-seed which is yet to become a great tree, the servants of Him who is compared to a stone cut out of the mountain, which grows and increases till it becomes a great mountain, which fills the whole earth, and that they are sowing the handful of corn on the top of the mountains, which is yet to yield a most plentiful harvest. The men of this world are accustomed to look with great contempt on the efforts of a

few Christian missionaries to convert the heathen world, and they wonder that they should expend their time and their energies in attempting to realise what they consider so extravagant and visionary a project. But they do not reflect that this is the very method which God is pleased to adopt for the accomplishment of His purposes; that the fewer and the weaker the instruments which He employs, the greater glory redounds to himself; that it is not by might nor by power that the temple of His Church is to be built, but by His Spirit; that, though Paul should plant and Apollos water, though a whole army of preachers and teachers were to go forth, invested with all the authority which the most powerful princes could give them, their labours would be utterly unavailing, if God were to withhold His blessing. They confine their attention merely to the personal influence which each labourer is able to exert, and, comparing that measure of influence with the prodigious numbers on whom it must be brought to bear, and the insurmountable obstacles which it has to encounter, they reckon all his efforts utterly useless, and deride the folly which, with such means, would attempt to accomplish such an end.

But was it not thus at the first promulgation of the gospel? Was it not thus at the era of the Reformation? And are we not assured in the word of God, that thus it will still be; that God reserves to himself the whole glory of converting the soul, of converting the world; and that, though He condescends to employ the instrumentality of His servants, the whole power

which renders their instrumentality effectual is of Himself alone? Though, therefore, the labourers as yet be few, we have no reason to be discouraged; greater is He who is with them, than all that can be against them. They may seem to be as uselessly employed as those who are scattering a handful of corn on the top of the mountains, and they may be subjected to as much contempt as if they were literally so engaged; nevertheless, the seed which they are sowing—the incorruptible seed of the word—shall not be lost, but in God's good time it will spring up; and after, perhaps, they have rested from their labours, the fruit thereof will shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass. The progress of Messiah's kingdom, no power of men or devils shall ever be able to arrest. They may lift up their puny arms and attempt to obstruct its onward march, but still it will advance, making one conquest after another. And in the present day, amidst all that is dark and lowering in the signs of the times, amidst all the opposition given to the cause of Him who is enthroned as King of Zion, that cause is acquiring additional vigour, and increasing the number of its adherents. It may indeed have many contests to call forth its energies, and many enemies may attempt to subvert it; but the issue is not doubtful. In every conflict it will prove victorious; over every enemy it will raise the shout of triumph. And this suggests to me my third observation derived from the text, namely,—

3. That the kingdom of Christ is destined finally to

comprehend the whole human race. However small it may be in its beginnings, however slow in its progress, it shall yet universally prevail, and men shall be blessed in the Saviour—all nations shall call Him blessed. Hitherto, His gospel has been received by only a small portion of this world's inhabitants; but at the appointed time, the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea; all the ends of the earth shall remember, and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Him. Every remnant of false religion shall be utterly abolished; the whole system of Popery shall be utterly overthrown; the delusions of Mahomet shall be completely exposed, and the abominations of Paganism entirely swept away. Yes, the banner of the Cross shall yet be unfurled, and wave in triumph in every land; the benign and hallowed influence of the gospel shall be felt in every heart. The blinded worshippers of idols shall cast them to the moles and to the bats; the altars on which they offered their horrid sacrifices they will utterly destroy, and in those places where idolatry performed her impure and sanguinary rites, shall temples be erected to Jehovah's honour, where His truth shall be declared, and His praises celebrated, with grateful hearts. The curse which has hitherto so blighted this miserable world shall be removed, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them and be their God. They shall be blessed in Jesus, for He shall be their light, their peace, their joy, their hope; and the contemplation of

His ineffable excellence shall impart to them unspeakable delight; they shall call Him blessed, rendering to Him the devoutest homage, and offering to Him the sublimest descriptions of praise. Then shall all quarrels and contentions cease; nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, and there shall be nothing to hurt or to destroy in all God's holy mountain. That these delightful and animating prophecies shall all be accomplished in due time, we are assured by the word and oath of God, who cannot lie. Yes, the heathen shall yet be given to the Son for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; and however improbable their conversion may appear, we may be as certain that it will be effected as if they were at this moment his enlightened, devoted, and happy worshippers. There may be mountains of difficulties in the way of this glorious consummation, but before the great Zerubbabel they shall become a plain. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it? Hath He spoken, and shall He not bring it to pass?"

Lastly, Christ's kingdom shall endure for ever. That kingdom consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and whenever it has been once established in the soul, it can never be overthrown. The old serpent and his seed may regard it with the bitterest hatred, and combine all their cunning, and all their energies for its destruction; but He that sitteth in heaven shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision. They may utter the most appalling threatenings; they may enact the most sanguinary laws; they

may employ racks and every instrument of torture ; they may kindle the fires of persecution, and burn the bodies of many saints at the stake ; or they may have recourse to all the arts of deception, in order to beguile those whose firmness they cannot subdue ; but they shall never be able either by fraud or by violence, to dethrone the Lord Jesus, or to wrest from Him one of His subjects. To the Son of Man has been given by His Father, dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him ; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall never pass away, and His kingdom that which shall never be destroyed. The powerful and extensive empires that ambitious men once established on the earth, now exist no more ; and the kingdoms which are now most flourishing, shall, in like manner, decay ; but the name of Jesus shall endure for ever ; it shall be celebrated throughout all generations ; and after it has been thus extolled upon earth, it shall be sung in still loftier strains, when time shall be no more.

Surely then, when we contemplate Christ's kingdom rising from beginnings so small, making so much progress amidst the most powerful opposition, at length extending its benign and heavenly influence over the whole world, and, after showering down the richest blessings on its subjects on earth, continuing to bestow on them still greater honours, still more transporting happiness through all eternity, we may well adopt the sublime language with which David concludes this Psalm—“ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be

His glorious name for ever : and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen."—(verses 18, 19.)

In endeavouring to improve this subject, I remark—

1st. That it is for the sake of this kingdom that the world is maintained in being, that empires rise, and empires fall. Think you, that if the most High God had no wise and gracious scheme to accomplish, He would, through successive ages, have borne with so many daring rebels against His authority ? O no ! It is because He can make the very wrath of men to praise Him, because He can over-rule all their plans and actions for the manifestation of His own glory, that He does not arrest them in their impious career, and inflict on them the tremendous sentence of His violated law. Kings, and statesmen, and warriors, and philosophers, and men of science, pursue their respective objects, and think only of the advancement of their power, and wealth, and pre-eminence, and glory, and know not there is One higher than they, who is carrying on to completion His own great scheme of redemption, and who, though they are ignorant of it, employs them as His agents for effecting His purposes. A Cæsar and an Augustus, actuated by the love of power, conquer nation after nation, and form them into one vast empire ; but they only thereby prepare the way for Messiah's appearance upon earth, and the general diffusion of His gospel. Ingenious men make great discoveries in arts and sciences, but they are soon applied to the furtherance of the gospel of Christ. Navigators, fired with the desire of discov-

ering new regions, explore every corner of the globe, and find out new continents, and innumerable groups of islands unknown before, and forthwith the christian sends the Missionary of the Cross to those lately discovered countries, and their inhabitants ere long receive the truth as it is in Jesus. In order to find out markets for their commerce and manufactures, merchants send out their vessels to all parts of the earth, and the knowledge which they thus acquire of the circumstances of many places, points out to the christian missionary the field of labour which he should go forth to occupy. In short, all the designs and actions of men are so regulated and controlled, that they are ultimately made to subserve the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. And whenever God's mighty plan is completed, and all His chosen people are made meet for glory, then the earth and all the things that are therein shall be burned up. And then it shall be made manifestly to appear that, had it not been for the kingdom of Christ which was to be established, the kingdoms of this world would not have been permitted to exist and flourish ; and that, though they did not think so, neither was it in their hearts to do so, the most ungodly sinners have in effect contributed to the advancement of Christ's kingdom upon earth.

2. I may remark how highly favoured, how exceedingly blessed, are they who are the subjects of this kingdom. They are brought into the nearest and most endearing relation to the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity ; they are the objects of His

paternal love ; they enjoy the light of His countenance ; they receive the grace of His Spirit ; they derive the most sacred satisfaction from the exercises of His worship ; they are assured of His unchangeable faithfulness ; they are directed by Him in all their difficulties, comforted by Him in all their sorrows, animated by Him amidst all their fears. They have a sovereign whose power is almighty, a father whose kindness is unbounded, a friend who never changes, a God whose fulness can never be exhausted. They have pleasures which the world knows not of, consolations which it never tastes, and hopes with which it is never inspired. They are subject to trials, but they have learned to rejoice even in tribulation ; they are often deprived of their substance, but they are enabled to take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they have a better and a more enduring substance ; they are often falsely accused and ignominiously treated, but divine grace being made sufficient for them, they can even take pleasure in reproaches, in persecutions, in necessities, in distresses for Christ's name's sake ; for when they are weak, then are they strong, and they can rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. They are conscious of daily failings and transgressions, but by daily application to the blood of Christ, their peace is renewed ; they have many and most arduous and self-denying duties to perform, but they have always access to a throne of grace, to which they are exhorted to come boldly, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need ; they are liable to the

stroke of death as well as others, but it is to death divested of its sting—death as the messenger of their heavenly Father, sent to call them home—death, as the short, and to nature, sometimes painful passage to the bright mansions of eternal bliss. Are they not then a blessed people whose God is the Lord? Yes, verily, for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.” And this blessedness belongs to all those who by faith have become the subjects of Zion’s King. And this blessedness belongs to you, if you have abandoned the service of all other masters, and invited Him to erect His throne in your hearts, and to reign over you for ever. And though the commencement of His kingdom in your souls has been scarcely perceptible, and though it has been most vigorously opposed by your inherent corruptions, and by the power of Satan, yet will it gradually assert its native energies, and subdue the whole man to its sway. With ever-increasing might, it will overthrow all the obstacles which obstruct its progress; with ever-growing excellence it will adorn your souls, till they are completely transformed into the image of Him whose servants you are, admitted into His glorious presence, seated with Him on His throne, and crowned with eternal glory. And when heaven has opened up its everlasting gates to receive you; when you hear the joyful welcome, “Well done, good and faithful servant;” when you take your place among the worshippers before the throne, and join with them in their lofty transporting anthems of praise

"to Him that loved you, and washed you from your sins in His own blood," will you not then be disposed most gratefully to acknowledge that to be a subject of Messiah's kingdom, is the highest honour to which it is possible for sinful men to be raised, and a source of the purest and most satisfying bliss, which it is possible for them to enjoy.

3. I may, then, well remind you, in the last place, how immense are the obligations of the subjects of this kingdom to adopt every means in their power to promote its progress, and to ensure in the end its universal diffusion. Have we been put in possession of heaven's most precious gift to sinful and perishing men, and have we received it with the express injunction to communicate it to others who are not so highly favoured, and shall we be satisfied with the personal enjoyment of its benefits, while so many of our fellow-creatures are utterly destitute of it, and strangers to the purity, the peace, the happiness which it imparts? Let us consider that, whatever temporal advantages they may enjoy, however fine their climate, however rich their soil, they must perish without the gospel of Christ. "There is none other name given under heaven among men whereby they can be saved, but the name of Jesus;" and if that name be not made known to them, if they be not informed of the great work which He undertook and accomplished, if He be not exhibited to their view as an all-sufficient and infinitely gracious Saviour, then they must die in their sins. They will not, indeed, be condemned for rejecting the gospel which they never

heard, and their guilt therefore will not be so great as that of those who neglect the salvation offered to them; but still the law under which they have been placed, and which they are convinced, in their own consciences, they have often violated, will pronounce sentence against them. And is it not a most mournful, a most intensely affecting spectacle, to behold millions upon millions of our race who are yet ignorant of the only Saviour, who are the deluded votaries of idolatry and superstition, who live without God, and die without hope. And when it is considered that every one of those countless myriads who, in heathen lands, are continually entering upon eternity, is possessed of a soul more valuable by far than the world and all that it contains—a soul that is destined for a never-ending existence—a soul that shall be everlastingly conscious of its degradation and misery, oh! surely we should regard them with the tenderest pity; surely, if there be anything which we can do, to make them acquainted in the way in which they may obtain salvation, that thing we should do without delay, that thing we should do with the greatest earnestness and zeal.

Let us consider further, that the gospel of Christ, in the hands of the Holy Spirit, is an effectual remedy for all their guilt and all their misery. Let them be the most ignorant and ferocious savages that ever wore the human form—let them be the most besotted idolaters that ever bowed the knee to stocks and stones—let them be the most cruel warriors that ever delighted to shed the blood of their enemies—let

them be the most wretched cannibals that ever feasted on human flesh—or let them be the proudest and the most self-conceited that Satan ever puffed up with a sense of their own superiority; still, the gospel of Christ is capable of effecting a most glorious change on their character and conduct, of enlightening, subduing, and converting them. It has already done so in cases apparently the most hopeless. The most furious and wretched creatures, who seemed to be possessed by a whole legion of devils, have been brought to the feet of Jesus clothed, and in their right mind; the most active agents of Satan have been persuaded to renounce his service and to enrol themselves among the followers of Christ. “The wilderness and the solitary place has been made glad, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.”

How striking an exemplification of the power of the gospel of Christ has been presented to us in the interesting and lovely islands of the South Sea, where the grossest ignorance and the most abominable idolatry, and the most detestable cruelty once prevailed, and where consequently Satan rested in the misery of his wretched slaves; but who, when vested with power from on high, cast their idols to the moles and to the bats, and became the devoted and grateful worshippers of the only living and true God, and manifested the benign influence of the truth as it is in Jesus in their whole spirit and conduct. In India, too, Brahmins of the highest order, and in Africa savages of the lowest grade, have cast themselves at the feet of Jesus, subdued by the mighty power of

His grace. And when they have thus passed from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, then they knew what true happiness was ; and then, under all the unavoidable evils of life, they had access to sources of the strongest consolation.

And what the gospel of Christ has already achieved, it is still capable of achieving. Let the most benighted and depraved sinners of mankind but hear the glorious truths of the gospel, and let them be applied to the heart by the agency of the Holy Spirit, then they will be changed into the enlightened, faithful, and zealous servants of the living God, and they will each of them become a centre of the most hallowed influences to all around them ; and then will they contemplate, with the deepest wonder, the change that has been effected on their views, and dispositions, and character ; and then will they acknowledge, with the most fervent gratitude, their obligations to those who sent among them the heralds of the cross, who proclaimed among them the unsearchable riches of Christ, who long and patiently bore with their stupidity and perverseness, and who at length became the instruments of their conversion—a blessing which they now know to be inestimable, and for which they can never be sufficiently grateful.

Are we not bound, then, to do what we can to send to them that gospel which has proved so unspeakable a blessing to us, and which will prove equally unspeakable to them ? Should we not view, with the tenderest compassion, whole nations sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death ? and should we not ask ourselves, Is there anything that we can do to

assist in delivering them from this degraded and miserable condition? There is. We are in possession of an effectual remedy for all the evils under which they labour; and we can do much to make them acquainted with that remedy, and to urge them to apply it. We can send missionaries among them to beseech them to turn from these vanities to which they are now addicted, and to serve the living and true God. We can pray that God would render the means which we employ effectual for the end intended, and we can endeavour to stir up others to take an interest in this great cause.

Let us remember, also; that this is a service which Christ requires at our hands, in testimony of our gratitude for His favours, and of our ardent desire that His kingdom should be extended over the whole earth. How much do we owe unto our Lord? O it is impossible to estimate the amount of our obligations to Him! Has He not bought us with His blood, and made known to us the way of salvation, and presented to us the most powerful motives to accept His offered mercy? And has he not made some of us willing in the day of His power, and enabled us to believe in His name, and conferred on us the pardon of all our sins, and restoration to the favour of an offended God, and the well-founded hope of being finally admitted into His presence above? And shall we not be disposed to say, Lord, what wilt Thou have us to do to manifest our gratitude to Thee for all the great things which Thou hast done for us? This He will have you to do—to use all the means in your power

to make known to your perishing fellow-sinners throughout the world, the glad tidings of salvation through His obedience, sufferings, and death. He does not, indeed, need your instrumentality for this purpose; He could easily effect it independently of your efforts; but He is pleased to confer on you the honour and privilege of being fellow-workers with Him in the grand work of converting the Gentiles, and of introducing that glorious period, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. And when He enjoins any of us to engage in that work, shall we say, I pray thee, have me excused? Shall we grudge to devote a suitable proportion of our time, our substance, our energies, our influence, to the advancement of His glory upon the earth? Shall we say, let the dark and miserable nations of the earth continue in their darkness and perish, rather than we should be subjected to any expense, or labour, or trouble on this account? O how can we persuade ourselves that we are the disciples of Him who submitted to the profoundest humiliation, the intensest agonies, the most ignominious death, for the salvation of sinners, if we are reluctant to make the slightest sacrifices for the same great object?

But, whether we take any interest in this glorious cause or not, whether we assist in promoting it or not, it will go on and prosper. God's promise will be accomplished, that He will give His Son the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. And the signs of the times indicate that that time is approaching, and we are assured

by God's own word, that come it will at its appointed season. Whatever obstacles stand in the way of the universal prevalence of His kingdom, shall be removed; and all the nations of the world, however sunk in ignorance, degradation, and misery, shall become the willing, devoted, and happy subjects of Zion's King. Yes,

Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

Behold the islands with their kings,
And Europe her best tribute brings ;
From north to south the princes meet
To pay their homage at His feet.

There Persia, glorious to behold,
There India shines in Eastern gold,
And barbarous nations at His word
Submit and bow and own their Lord.

For Him shall endless prayer be made,
And praises throng to crown His head ;
His name like sweet perfume shall rise
With every morning sacrifice.

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His name.

Blessings abound where'er He reigns,
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains ;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.

When He displays His healing power
 Death and the curse are known no more ;
 In Him the tribes of Adam boast
 More blessings than their father lost.

Let every creature rise and bring
 Peculiar honours to our King ;
 Angels descend with songs again,
 And earth repeat the long Amen.

SERMON IV.

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING.

TITUS ii. 13.—“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

HE saving grace of God, we are assured by the apostle in the context, teaches all who are partakers of it to deny ungodliness, &c., ver. 11—12. It does not consist of a mere set of notions or ideas, to which the understanding may give its assent, without exercising any practical influence on the heart, but of the most spirit-stirring truths which cannot be believed without powerfully prompting us to abound in every good word and work. The man who is most firmly persuaded that he is saved by grace through faith, without deeds of law, will also feel himself under the strongest obligations to bring forth those fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. And the motives by

which he is stimulated to cultivate all the graces, and practice all the duties which should adorn the Christian character, are derived from what Christ has already done for him in time past, and from what He has promised to do for him in time to come. He appeared in this world the first time, to give Himself for him, an offering and a sacrifice unto God; He opened his understanding to perceive his guilt, and misery, and danger; He made him willing, in the day of His power, to accept the salvation so freely offered to him; He introduced him into the family of God, and imparted to him that peace which passeth all understanding. The love of Christ constraineth him to live not unto himself. But it is not only when he looks back on the past, on the great things that Christ has already done for him, that he is led zealously to do the will of God, but also when he anticipates the future, and contemplates the glorious prospects which are set before him. Both these classes of motives are brought before us in this passage. There is the grace of God which has brought salvation, teaching the believer to deny ungodliness and lusts; and while he is thus zealously labouring to imitate the example of his Lord, there is the animating prospect unfolded to him of his glorious appearance on the last day to raise his body from the grave, and to acknowledge and honour him before an assembled universe. It is here declared by the apostle, of all God's people, that while the grace of God teaches them to deny ungodliness and lusts, they are also 'looking for the blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of their great God and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.'

There are two points presented to us in this text, to which, in humble dependence on divine grace, I propose on the present occasion to direct your attention—

1st, There shall be a glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2nd, Believers look forward with earnest desire to the time when this sublime event, which is the object of their hope, shall take place.

1st, There shall be a glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. This great event is again and again announced in Scripture in the plainest and most impressive language, and no one calls it in question who bears the Christian name. But how few are there who really believe it, and who act in accordance with that belief! The great majority of professing Christians, indeed, do not express any doubt in regard to the statements of Scripture on this subject, but their views of it are of a very general nature, and they exercise no salutary influence upon their dispositions and conduct. They regard it as one of those events which will happen at some very distant period in the future, and in which, therefore, they feel but little present interest. Thus they give evident proof, whatever they may assert, that they do not really believe this doctrine; for it cannot be believed without exciting the deepest interest in the soul, and without leading us diligently to prepare for an event so transcendently important. But the Lord will assuredly appear the second time, whoever doubts it, whoever disbelieves it, whoever is indifferent about it. His word is pledged for it, and

heaven and earth shall pass away, but His word shall not pass away. His honour is involved in it ; for it is then that He shall stand revealed in His true character before all men, all angels, all devils. His plan requires it ; for that plan would not be accomplished, if he did not render to every man according to his works. And what though several hundred years have elapsed since he said, 'Behold I come quickly !' and what though several thousands more may pass away before he is seen coming in the clouds of heaven ! this does not, in the least degree, affect the certainty of the event. Different periods of time are long or short, when compared with other periods of time. There are certain insects which come into existence, sport their little hour in the sunshine, deposit their eggs and die. If one of these were endowed with reason, and if he were acquainted with no other beings that lived longer than himself, the one who lived only for a day would reckon twenty days a long period ; for twenty generations of his fellow creatures would, during that space of time, have passed away ; and twenty years, in which 2700 generations would be swept from the earth, would seem to him an immense duration ; and a thousand years would appear to be an almost endless period. In like manner, those periods which we are accustomed to consider long, will appear, we have reason to believe, very short to angels, who existed before the creation of the world ; and we know that, to God, who has existed from eternity, 'one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.' At the end of the world, we

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shall compare the various periods of time, not with each other, but with eternity; and then they will appear as nothing, and the language of Scripture will be accounted literally true.

The appearance of the Lord Jesus at the last-day will be a most glorious appearance. When He first appeared on earth, He assumed the form of a servant; He was despised and rejected of men; He was arraigned as a malefactor at the bar of Pilate, and condemned to suffer the infamous death of crucifixion. But then the shame of the cross will be completely wiped away. Then He will appear in his own divine glory as the eternal Son of God, in the glory of His Father, and of the holy angels. The voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall be heard proclaiming His approach. He shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire. He shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him. And if one angel be so resplendent, what must be the glory of the whole assembled host on this grand occasion! A throne of dazzling splendour shall be erected, such as human eye never before beheld. But who may attempt to describe the glory of Him who shall sit on that throne, "from whose face the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and there shall be found no place for them?" The splendour of ten thousand suns, were they all united in one, would be darkness itself, compared with the effulgent glory which shall beam from the Lord Jesus on the last day. All created glory shall be utterly eclipsed in the presence of this glory that excelleth. And it will

be for a purpose the most important that He will thus appear, and the results of his appearance will be inconceivably interesting to the whole human race. He shall, we are told, judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. All mankind shall stand in his presence, and hear from his lips the sentence which is to decide their everlasting destiny. The office which He will discharge on that occasion, will be one incomparably dignified and majestic; but it will be evident to the whole universe that He is perfectly qualified for the work which the Father has committed to Him as Mediator. He will appear also in order to confer the highest possible honour on His believing people. "I am now ready to be offered, &c." (2 Tim. iv. 6 to 8). "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, &c." (1 John iii. 2). And no language can convey a higher idea of the glory with which the saints shall be clothed, than that they shall be like to their glorified Lord. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that believers should be looking forward with earnest expectation to the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus.

This is the *second* topic to which we proposed to direct your attention. They are represented in the text as looking for that blessed hope and glorious appearing. This looking implies, 1st, A firm belief that the Lord will thus gloriously appear at the last day. And he believes it simply on the divine testimony. God has frequently declared it in His word, and he receives it as true and as infinitely important. This doctrine indeed is an article in the creed of all profess-

ing Christians; but it is not an active principle in their hearts. The most trivial occurrences connected with this present world, excite a far deeper interest in their minds than the glorious appearance of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They look only to the things which are seen and temporal. Not so the true Christian. He looks for this great event, because he has a deep conviction that it will certainly take place at its appointed time; and his belief has a powerful influence upon his heart and conduct.

2. This looking implies that we are in a state of preparation for it. No one can look for the second coming of Christ, who has not a well founded persuasion that he is one of those whom He will then acknowledge and honour as His true disciples. If we observe an affectionate wife or mother looking earnestly for the arrival of a beloved husband or son, we take it for granted that everything at home is in a state of readiness for his reception and entertainment. Or, if a sovereign has announced his intention to pay a visit to one of his subjects, and we see this person looking earnestly for the arrival of the monarch, we infer from it that he has made all necessary preparations for the entertainment of so illustrious a guest; and this preparation on the part of the Christian, consists in the daily exercise of faith in the Lord Jesus, in the cultivation of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, in having his loins girded and his lamp burning, like unto one who waits for the coming of his Lord.

3. This looking implies an earnest desire for the

event. ‘Surely,’ says our Lord, ‘I come quickly.’ ‘Amen’ says John, ‘Even so, come Lord Jesus.’ We have a very interesting illustration of this feeling in the case of the mother of Sisera, who was expecting the return of her son laden with the spoils of the Israelites, in which she and her attendants were expecting to share. ‘The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, ‘Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?’ There are two grand reasons why the believer ardently desires to behold Christ’s glorious appearing at the last day. The first of these is, because his Lord will then be in the highest degree glorified; and the second is, because he himself will then be raised to the highest dignity and glory.

Now, Jesus whom his soul loves, is greatly dishonoured; but then, He shall receive the glory due to His name. Then His own people will celebrate his praise in the most rapturous strains; and even those who despised and rejected Him, shall then be obliged to stand before Him as their Almighty Judge, and to hear their final doom pronounced by Him, in whom as a Saviour they would not believe. Now the believer is subject to afflictions and sufferings of every kind. Then sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away. Now he is liable to death, and his body must soon see corruption in the grave; but then his body shall be raised again in incorruption, in glory and power, to die no more. Now he has often to struggle with poverty and all its attendant evils; but then he shall be enriched with all the treasures of heaven, and

he shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Now sin dwells within him, mingling with all he thinks, or says, or does, and causing him often to exclaim with the apostle, ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ! But then he shall be without fault before the throne of God ; then he shall exult in the possession of perfect purity ; then he shall offend his God and Saviour no more. Now his heart is often sickened by the sight of abounding iniquity—he beholds transgressors and is grieved ; but then his eyes shall see nothing but the glory of Jehovah, and the glory of his image shining in all around him. But the believer

4. Waits patiently for this glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus. He is fully persuaded that it is ever drawing nearer and nearer, and that it will come in its appointed time ; he is daily preparing for it ; he earnestly desires it, but at the same time waits for it, with profound submission to the will of God. Jesus will come, and will not tarry a single moment beyond the time that infinite wisdom has fixed for this sublime manifestation of his glory. And, therefore, his look is not the look of impatience or of restless anxiety, but of strong desire and of well-founded hope ; and this hope, by which he is animated, is here called a blessed hope ; a blessed hope indeed, which renders all who possess it unspeakably blessed !

Are they subjected to manifold afflictions and trials in this vale of tears ? This blessed hope enables them to glory even in tribulation, to reckon all the sufferings of this present time unworthy to be compared

with that exceeding great and eternal weight of glory which is revealed in them. Are they reproached for the name of Jesus? This blessed hope enables them to rejoice and be exceeding glad, knowing that great is their reward in the kingdom of heaven. Are they struggling with indwelling corruption, which they abhor, but which continues to cleave to them? This blessed hope encourages and animates their souls during the painful conflict. Sin, they are assured, shall not have dominion over them; for they are not under the law, but under grace. They shall yet be holy as God is holy; they shall be completely transformed into His image, and every desire and feeling of their hearts shall be in perfect accordance with His holy will. Do they contemplate with sadness the gloom and corruption of the grave? This blessed hope enables them to triumph over the last enemy, and to say, 'This corruptible body must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. O death! where is thy sting?'

Let us now endeavour to improve this subject by inquiring—first, Are we looking for the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ? I trust there are some among us, who are to be ranked among that blessed number, who do firmly believe that their Lord shall thus gloriously appear at the last day, who reckon this appearance a most desirable event, and who are endeavouring habitually to prepare for it. But is it not a fact that there are comparatively few even of them, whose faith in this great event is of a very lively and influential nature?

O what manner of persons would we be in all holy conversation and godliness, if we were really looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God ! How little and insignificant, then, would all the concerns of time appear to us ! How light and momentary all the afflictions to which we are subjected in this present world ! How little value would we set upon riches, which are so soon to be burnt up in the universal conflagration ! How trifling all the honours and distinctions which can be conferred on us here on earth ! How unworthy of our destiny, to be much concerned about the enjoyment of the fleeting pleasures of sense ! What an elevation of thought and feeling would such a faith produce in us ! what spirituality of mind, and what earnest desire to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man ! Believing firmly that He will come, that His coming draweth nigh, and that it is ever approaching nearer and nearer, how insignificant will all these pursuits appear to us in which worldly men are so completely absorbed ! and how deeply we must feel the importance of possessing and cultivating that state of mind and heart in which we would wish to be found in that day ! In illustration of the effect which must be produced by such a belief as that of which we have spoken, we may refer to the case of a man whose mind is filled by one subject, which he reckons great and important. On other things, except in so far as they may assist him in acquiring the grand object of his ambition, he sets but little value. In other pursuits he takes comparatively but little interest ; and by the events which are happen-

ing around him, he is but slightly affected. There is one thing on which he has set his heart—there is one thing which he is determined to obtain ; and, keeping this object continually in view, he renounces everything which might interfere with its attainment. Just so the believer, with an infinitely more glorious prospect before him, even the second coming of his Lord, deeply feels that it is his one grand concern to be prepared for this event, and that if this should be neglected, every other possession would profit him nothing. We have an example of the blessed effects of such a belief in the case of the primitive Christians. They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring inheritance. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus. Their faith gave a present vivid reality to the things which are unseen ; they regarded the glorious appearing of the Saviour as absolutely certain, and they were assured that they would speedily participate in all the blessings of His kingdom. They considered themselves as being continually on the brink of an eternal world, and about to appear before their Lord, and therefore they endured, with the utmost patience and cheerfulness, all the tribulations to which they were subjected ; nay, they willingly laid down their lives, cheered with the hope of a glorious resurrection. And if the faith of the people of God now were as vigorous as theirs, it would be attended with the same blessed results. They would exhibit a noble superiority to all earthly pursuits and enjoyments ; they would be daily looking

forward to the period of their departure from this present world, and to the time when their Lord shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And while earnestly looking for these events, they would be diligent, that they might be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless, exercising all devout and holy affections, and zealously and actively performing the work which He has given them to do.

But, secondly, let us imagine, Are there not some who are not looking for this blessed hope, because they are still in a state of doubt in regard to their personal interest in the salvation of the gospel? O, say they, if we were assured, on good grounds, that we were the children of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, then would we look forward with earnest desire to His glorious appearance in the last day! But, alas! it is not so with us. Our faith, if we have any, is so weak, and our hope, consequently, is so faint, that we are filled with uneasy and even alarming apprehensions, when we anticipate this most sublime event. Truly blessed and enviable, we reckon the condition of those who have a good hope through grace of their acceptance with God through Jesus Christ; and we would give the world, were it all our own, if it could procure for us such a privilege. Nay, though ten thousand worlds were yours, and you offered them all for such a blessing, they would be utterly rejected; but you may obtain it without money and without price. Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ, offered to the very chief of sinners, offered to you,

offered to you now. Those who now possess it, are not more worthy of it than you. The only difference between them and you is, that they have accepted as a free gift, that which you are endeavouring to obtain in some other way ; that they regard the testimony of God concerning His Son to be true, and rest on that testimony as a true ground of hope, while you are attempting to build on some other foundation. Should you not then seriously inquire, Why do I continue in so uncomfortable a state, if there be ample provision made in the gospel for my enjoyment of peace and hope? Surely no subject more important than this can engage my attention : how then, you ask, may I obtain this joy and peace? Simply by believing ; by believing that the Lord Jesus has fulfilled the law which condemned you ; that He has endured the penalty which you deserved to suffer ; that God requires nothing more than what he has done and suffered, to vindicate His holiness and justice ; and that 'He is now in Christ, reconciling the world into Himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses.' If this be God's truth, it is surely worthy of being believed, worthy of all acceptance ; and if you, as a guilty, perishing, helpless sinner believe it, it will certainly impart peace to your soul. And if this faith be daily exercised, it will daily maintain this peace, and it will work by love, and prompt you by the most powerful motives to devote yourself to the service and glory of Him who loved you and gave Himself for you. Give all diligence, then, to make your calling and election sure. Endeavour to under-

stand distinctly the grounds of a sinner's salvation ; for till then you can never enjoy solid peace. Beware of continuing in a state of doubt and uncertainty whether you are to be condemned or honoured at Christ's second coming ; whether you are to be happy or miserable through all eternity. And, O, attend to this grand concern now, while you are able to exercise the faculties of your mind, and delay it not till disease invade your frame, and you are placed on the brink of eternity.

But, thirdly, Are there not some among us to whom Christ's glorious appearing is an object of terror and not of hope ? It ought to be so to all who have never by faith committed their souls into His hands, and who love the world, and the things of the world more than Him. Well, Christ will thus gloriously appear, whether you are prepared for this great event or not. You shall behold him coming in his glory ; you shall hear the voice of the archangel and the trump of God ; you shall be summoned to appear before His great white throne ; you shall be obliged to stand before Him, arrayed in all the majesty of the universal Judge ; you must give account to Him of the deeds done in the body ; you must hear a sentence pronounced upon you, in circumstances the most solemn and appalling that were ever beheld ; a sentence uttered by a king of infinite dignity and glory ; a sentence uttered in the presence of the assembled universe ; a sentence, the awful consequences of which shall extend throughout all eternity ; a sentence from which there is no appeal, and a sentence which can

never be reversed. Yes, you shall be raised from your graves, and earnestly wish that rocks and mountains might fall upon you to cover you from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb. But you can neither hide yourselves from His eye, nor elude His grasp, nor resist His power, nor impeach His justice. Trembling, confounded, ashamed, you will be dragged to His high tribunal ; and there you will encounter His withering frown ; and there your ingratitude, and your baseness, and your rebellion, and your impenitence will be publicly declared ; and there your mouths will be stopped, and you will not be able to say a word in your own vindication. And there you will be convinced that it is indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, as the victims of His justice. That which you will not be persuaded to think of now, you will find to be a tremendous reality then. The last day has now arrived. The Judge is on the throne, and before Him are gathered all nations ; and you are there in the character of impenitent and unbelieving sinners; and your doom is thundered forth with a voice louder and more terrific than ten thousand thunders ; and you are hurried away from the judgment-seat, and you are delivered over to the tormentors; and you are plunged into the burning lake, and lift up your eyes in hell, being in torments and despair—black despair surrounds your souls with its impenetrable gloom ; and conscience stings you with its sharpest reproaches, and an angry God lays His heavy hand upon you, and devils exult over you, and companions

in sin upbraid you ; and you look forward and forward, but perceive no ray of hope. Misery, unmixed, uninterrupted, and intense, is to be your portion through all eternity. O then, ere your precious day of grace be gone for ever, seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He is near. Flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel, and then you will look forward with joyful hope to the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ ; and when you behold Him coming in the clouds of heaven, you will exultingly exclaim, This is our God and Saviour, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.

SERMON V.

THE MAJESTY AND OMNISCIENCE OF THE FINAL JUDGE.

REV. xx. 11—12.—“And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened ; and another book was opened, which is *the book of life* ; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

HE apostle John was favoured with the clearest conceptions of the conflicts, the progress, and the triumphs of the Church of Christ from his own time to the consummation of all

things. And in this chapter he presents to our view that most glorious period when, for a thousand years, Satan shall be bound with a great chain and confined in the bottomless abyss, and the empire of righteousness, and purity, and peace, and joy, and love, shall be universally established. After this blessed millenium has terminated, however, he informs us that the Wicked One shall again be loosed for a short time, and make one more prodigious effort for the destruction of the Church of Christ. This is the last struggle; and though he has put forth all his strength, he is utterly crushed and overwhelmed. And now the last great day has come! that day to which the people of God have in every age been looking forward with the intensest interest—that day when all the purposes of Jehovah in regard to the human race are to receive their full accomplishment, and when this world, with all that it contains, shall be involved in inextinguishable flames. The ungodly, indeed, are living in utter forgetfulness of it, and saying, “where is the promise of His coming?” but the final day has now dawned, in which proceedings are to take place in comparison with which all the most important transactions in which men have ever been engaged, appear as nothing and less than nothing. The righteousness of God’s administration is now to be vindicated before the whole universe; the destiny of all mankind is to be determined; and ineffable bliss or intolerable anguish is to be the everlasting portion of all intelligent beings. And in the passage which we have now read, the inspired writer describes, in language at once surpass-

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ingly simple and eminently sublime, the stupendous scene which was presented to him in vision, but which will be beheld by every eye when time shall be no more. And may the Holy Spirit be graciously powerfully-present in the midst of us, while I endeavour to direct your attention—

- 1st,* To the great white throne ;
- 2nd,* To the infinitely great Judge who sits thereon ;
- 3rd,* To the dead, both small and great, who are to appear before Him ;
- 4th,* To the opened books, by the contents of which they are to be judged.

The *first* glorious object which John on this occasion beheld, was a great white throne, such as was never before seen by mortal eye—radiant with the purest lustre, and effulgent beyond all conception. A most significant emblem this, of the unsullied purity of God's character, and of the perfect righteousness of his decisions. At present the throne is surrounded by clouds and darkness ; but then these clouds shall be dispelled, and the glory of His moral government will be displayed. At present His judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out ; but then a light shall be poured on them, by which they shall be perfectly understood. Irreligious men now often presume to arraign the divine procedure in the government of the world, and to murmur at divine dispensations as partial, unequal, and unjust. And even the people of God themselves are sometimes disposed,

like Jeremiah, to expostulate with Him, and to say, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when I plead with Thee ; yet let me talk with Thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper ? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously ?" Often do the ungodly prosper in the world, and increase in wealth, and rise to honour, and enjoy everything that the world can bestow, while God's most faithful servants are subjected to pinching poverty, to severe affliction, to cruel persecution. Often the most wicked sinners escape the punishment due to their crimes, while the excellent of the earth are subjected to reproach and suffering for Christ's name sake. A Nero is on the throne, and a Paul is in the dungeon. A Dives is clothed in purple and fine linen, and a Lazarus is laid at his gate covered with sores. A Roman harlot is arrayed in scarlet and gold, and rides forth in all the pomp of worldly grandeur, while Christ's Church is driven into corners. And hence blinded sinners flatter themselves with the hopes of impunity, though they continue to walk in the way of their own hearts and after the sight of their own eyes. It is thus absolutely necessary that a day should arrive, in which it shall be fully demonstrated that verily there is a reward for the righteous, that verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth. And the day is hastening onwards. Lo ! it will come. The great white throne shall be erected, and then all the reproaches which have been cast on God's dispensations will be completely wiped away, and all the darkness in which His dealings to His people have been

shrouded, will be entirely dispelled. All the decisions which proceed from the throne, shall be universally acknowledged to be righteous and equitable. Such a flood of light shall then be poured on the whole moral government of Jehovah, that the mouths even of the condemned shall be stopped, while the righteous shall with rapture exclaim, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, Thou King of Saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for Thou only art holy; for all nations shall come and worship before Thee, for thy judgments are made manifest." The first glimpse that the finally impenitent obtain of the great white throne, shall for ever put to flight all the cavils which they have been accustomed to urge against the counsels and ways of the Most High, while His own people exult in the public manifestation given of all His glorious perfections. The judgment-seat, then, is here called a *throne*, and a *great throne*, because it is occupied by Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords; and a great *white* throne to denote the perfect rectitude of all the judgments which He is about to pronounce from it.

Let us now, *secondly*, direct your attention to Him that sitteth on this throne. But what terms may we employ to represent to you the majesty and glory of this Judge? It is impossible for human language to convey a higher idea of that majesty and glory than the language which the apostle here uses in describing the vision presented to his view: "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face

the earth and the heaven fled away." What incomparable sublimity in this statement! Nothing worthy of being compared to it, is to be found in the most admired writings of the most admired authors. The late venerable Dr. Erskine of Edinburgh furnishes us with a striking illustration of this point: "A young gentleman, lately returned from finishing his college education, chanced to fall into the company of a number of aged Christians, whom he thought to astonish by reciting sublime passages from the poets and orators of the age; and among other things of this description he quoted with great emphasis the well-known lines of a very celebrated writer:—

"The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself;
Yea, all who it inhabit shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind."

Having finished the quotation, he began to pronounce a eulogism upon it, boldly affirming that there was nothing to be found equal to it in sublimity and grandeur in either ancient or modern literature. An aged Christian who had attentively listened to the whole harangue, at last interposed, and ventured to question the decision, affirming that he could produce a passage equally sublime. The young man, startled in surprise, instantly challenged the speaker; on which the old gentleman, in a grave and solemn tone, responded, 'and I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.' "Well," said the young man, overpowered

with astonishment, "you have indeed made good your point. That does infinitely surpass it; but pray, allow me to ask, Where did you meet it? In which of our classical authors does it occur? for in all my reading I never met with it." "Oh," said the old gentleman gravely, "it occurs in a very common everyday book;" and calling for a bible, turned to Rev. xx. 11. "There," said he, "read for yourself." This completed the young man's confusion; he declared, that he had read the Bible over and over again, but that he had never noticed the verse before, and with difficulty could be brought to believe his own eyes."

Who, then, may stand before the Judge? Or, who may abide the day of his coming? Not only shall sinners be unable to stand before the Judge, but the very heavens and the earth are represented as fleeing from his presence. How different His appearance now from that which He assumed, when he appeared on the earth! Then He was considered the son of Joseph the carpenter, and was despised and rejected of men; now He presents Himself to the universe in His own glory, the glory of His Father, and of the holy angels. Then His only followers were a few obscure illiterate fishermen; but now all the angels of heaven are His attendants. Then he had not where to lay his head; now He is acknowledged and honoured as the Lord of all. Once He was reviled, and insulted, and blasphemed; but now he is adored with the profoundest awe by all holy beings, and devils and wicked men tremble before Him. Once He was arraigned as a

malefactor before the bar of Pilate, the Roman Governor, and condemned ; but now the whole human race stand at His tribunal, in order to hear the sentence from His lips by which their everlasting state shall be determined. Once He was affixed to an ignominious cross, and bore all its shame and pain ; but now He ascends the great white throne in the character of the universal Judge. And is this indeed He who once on earth was mocked and buffeted, and spit upon, and scourged, and crowned with thorns, and nailed to the accursed tree ? It is the very same ; but the period of his humiliation has passed away, and He is now crowned with glory and honour ; and he is about to discharge the sublime functions of the office of Judge conferred on Him as the reward of his voluntary self-abasement. The Son of man once so poor is now come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him ; and he now sits upon the throne of His glory. He is in every respect most gloriously qualified for pronouncing a righteous sentence on all mankind, and for carrying the sentence into complete execution. Though it be a human being that appears on the throne of judgment, yet He is God as well as man. He knows the secrets of all hearts, and the motives from which all actions have flowed. He has been at all times present with every individual of the human race, at home and abroad, by night and by day. His eyes have been in every place, beholding the evil and the good. His understanding is infinite ; he is as able to form a perfectly correct judgment with regard to the whole of mankind as with regard to any individual of them, for every one of them

has been as carefully observed by him, as if he had been the only object of his inspection. Nothing is too vast for him to comprehend ; nothing too minute for him to notice. He possesses a dignity which no one now dares to call in question, a knowledge which every one is now fully convinced is infinite, a purity that is untainted, and a power that is almighty. It is felt to be a very solemn scene on earth, when a judge possessed of distinguished excellence of character, and of the most penetrating sagacity and discernment, appears on the bench in order to try a great number of criminals who have been guilty of high treason, and who, there is every reason to fear, are to be doomed to suffer the death of traitors. And what a tumult of emotion is excited in the breasts of the parties themselves, when they catch the first glimpse of their judge, surrounded by all the insignia of his high office, and about to enter upon their trial ! They feel that never before were they placed in circumstances so intensely interesting, and that on the issue of this investigation depend their honour, their comfort, their lives. But how much more glorious, infinitely more, the presence of the Judge of all in the last great day ! At a moment when the great bulk of mankind are plunged in carnal security, buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, suddenly the heavens are rent asunder, and forth issues, in all His divine majesty and glory, the Lord Jesus to judge the world. The voice of the archangel and the trump of God is heard, proclaiming His approach, and summoning the whole of Adam's posterity to appear

before Him. A great white throne is beheld, suspended in the vast expanse of heaven ; and one ascends the throne, from whose face the earth and the heavens flee away. Was ever sight like this presented to human eye ? Was there ever such a Majesty enthroned in the view of mankind ? Was there ever such a tribunal and such a judge ? Oh no ! The most magnificent and awfully interesting scenes which have ever been beheld, these dwindle into utter meanness and insignificance, when compared with the spectacle which every eye shall see at the last decisive day. Yes ! every eye shall see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Your eye and my eye shall behold Him sitting on the great white throne, and we shall be summoned to appear before Him.

This leads me to notice, in the *third* place, those whom John beheld standing before God, namely, ‘the dead both small and great.’ In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, all who have been in the graves come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and others to the resurrection of damnation. And no sooner have the dead been raised than they see the Judge enthroned, and receive the summons to be at His bar. What a stupendous change has divine power in an instant effected ! The bodies of the whole race, which have been entirely dissolved, and the dust of them scattered to the east and to the west, to the north and to the south, are in a moment restored to life, and stand up a great multitude which no man can number. Not one is amiss, not one is over-

looked ; they are all there without any exception, from Adam to the last born infant of the race. Both the small and the great are there ; terms, which may be applied both to age and rank or outward circumstances. Yes, the young shall be there, from the merest infant to the full-grown child ; and this class shall constitute the vast majority of all who are to be judged. My young friends, you are yet to see a great sight—the Lord Jesus sitting on the great white throne. It is not more certain that you exist at this moment, than that you shall behold this stupendous scene. Children, you shall behold it ; young men and young women, you shall behold it. All of you shall stand before God. What will be your views and feelings and expectations then ? You must contemplate this spectacle, either with the most transporting joy or with the most agonising fear. You will be there, exclaiming with rapture, “This is the Lord ; we have waited for Him ; we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation ;” or calling upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon you and to cover you from the face of the Lamb. Ye who are now in the vigour of manhood, you shall also be there, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. And ye who have reached the threescore years, or threescore years and ten, you shall also be there, to answer for the improvement you have made of all the precious privileges which you have so long enjoyed. The rich will be there as well as the poor, the high as well as the low, the powerful as well as the weak, the renowned as well as the obscure, the monarch as well as his subjects. No one can decline the jurisdiction

of the Judge ; none refuse to appear before Him. Whatever may be the issue, stand before Him they must, in order that the real character may be made known to an assembled universe, that they may be either approved and honoured, or condemned and covered with shame. And what an overwhelming prospect to the impenitent and unbelieving, that they also must be there, that they too must stand before God ! Yes, prayerless persons, and profane swearers, and Sabbath-breakers, and the disobedient to parents, and the malicious and revengeful, the licentious and polluted, the dishonest and fraudulent, the false and hypocritical, the covetous and envious, must be all there. You will not come into His presence now by prayer and supplication, when He is seated on a throne of grace ; but you must have an interview with Him when placed on His throne of judgment. You will not ask mercy now, and you must have justice without mercy then. Should not each one of us seriously ask, Shall I too stand before God ? Shall I constitute one of the most prodigious assemblage that shall be brought to His tribunal ? And shall I be fully assured that He is as well acquainted with my whole history and character, as if I had been a solitary being in His universe, and as if there were not another individual to be judged ? Must I behold with my own eyes all the proceedings of this most important of days, and must I then hear the sentence from which there is no appeal, and which shall fix my everlasting state ? O yes. It is appointed unto men, it is appointed unto me, once to die, and after this the judgment. Before Him shall

be gathered all nations, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

Let us now, *fourthly*, contemplate the opened books, by the contents of which the dead are to be judged. ‘And the books,’ says John, ‘were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ By the books, we are to understand the registers which have been kept of men’s thoughts and words and actions; of the talents and privileges they have enjoyed, and the improvement they have made of them; of the motives by which they have been actuated, and of the correspondence of their whole conduct with the rule of life under which they have been placed. A most complete record of every man’s history is written in several volumes, and these volumes shall be produced and read in the last great day, and judgment shall be pronounced on every one, according to what is found therein. What, then, are we to understand by the striking imagery of the opened books? What are the volumes which are then to be unrolled, and their contents made known to the whole universe?

1st, I observe that man’s conscience or memory keeps a book, and that book will be opened in the last day. There are distinct traces left in every man’s own mind of all that he has thought, and said, and done; and though the traces may now be obscured and entirely hid from his view, yet in the great day they will be all revived and clearly preserved. We are

continually occupied in writing something in the book of conscience; and though there are many things there recorded which we wish to blot out for ever, we shall not be able to accomplish it. In this world we may indeed to a certain extent succeed ; we may neglect to read the volume ; and when it is held up distinctly before us, we may refuse to look at it. But this will not be possible at the judgment seat of Christ, The writing shall then appear in characters most clear. As the traces made on paper by certain kinds of ink speedily disappear, but are revived and rendered permanent when exposed to the heat of a fire ; so the writing which is made on the book of conscience, soon becomes dim, and perhaps invisible, till the fiery storm which proceedeth from the face of the Judge, renders it so clear that every one may and must read it. What an awful consideration, then, is it to ungodly and impenitent sinners, that every transgression they commit is registered in the book of conscience ; and that on every occasion on which they sin against God they may justly say, Well, I have written on the book of conscience the time and the place I acted thus and thus ; and if his hand-writing be not blotted out by the application of the blood of Christ, I shall see it again in character of flame when I stand before the great white throne. Do I neglect to pray ? Do I slight God's word ? Do I cherish and gratify sensual desires ? Do I misimprove and profane the Sabbath ? Do I injure my neighbour in his person, his property, or his reputation ? If I act contrary to my convictions of duty and to all my professions and obliga-

tions, the conscience takes up her pen, and leaves on the tablets of memory a record of every violation of God's law. And though I may turn away my eyes from this writing, and bury it under the rubbish of business, yet there it is, graven as on the rock with a pen of iron, and there shall I behold it in the last awful day. I may now sin on, but conscience will also write on; and the more I sin, the longer and blacker the catalogue she shall at length hold up before me. Suppose a correct record were kept of all the thoughts that had passed through my mind for a single week, of all my desires and feelings, of all my conversations with my fellow-creatures, and of all my behaviour towards God and towards men. Suppose it were written with perfect impartiality, and a contrast at the same time were drawn between what I am and what God requires me to be, what would be my fear in reading it? would not shame and confusion cover me? Assuredly they would, unless I were utterly given up to a reprobate mind. Then, what must be my horror and remorse, when the awful volume is opened up before me at the judgment of the great day, which contains an exact account of all that I have done, and all that I have been during my whole life? But assuredly the book will be opened, and you shall be obliged to read what is written therein; but if anything should be wanting in this book it would be found in another book, for another book, shall be opened, namely—The Book of God's Remembrance. And in that ample volume is recorded the whole history of every individual of the human race. Not a thought has

ever arisen in any mind, but is there ; not a word has ever proceeded from any mouth, but is there ; not a deed has ever been performed by any man's hand, but is there. God has been present in every human being from the first to the last moment of his existence on earth ; and every thing he has thought, or said, or done, is all well known to him. Sinners may have succeeded in hiding their actions from their fellow-men, and they may have been flattering themselves that no eye saw them ; but God was then looking upon them, and recording their doings in the book of His remembrance. The book of conscience which contains every one's separate history, is only, as it were, a leaf out of the book of God's remembrance ; and the writing in the one will exactly correspond with that in the other. O what discoveries will be made at last by the opening of the two books ! What hidden things will then be revealed ! What abominations will then be disclosed ! How many plausible hypocrites will then be unmasked ! How many who had a form of godliness without the power, will appear in their true character ! In what a different aspect shall Christ's servants then appear from that in which they were often represented by his enemies on earth ! How greatly shall they then be honoured on account of those very things for which they are now most reproached. But ah ! we can form no adequate idea of the intense interest which shall be felt by the whole assembled world, while both these books are read in their hearing.

But there is a third book which shall be opened ; and that is the book of God's Law. In that book it is

found written as a law, binding on every intelligent being, ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all heart, with all soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.’ And there also it is written, “Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” Now, here is the holy, just, and good law which all men are bound by the most solemn and powerful obligations to obey; and here is the penalty incurred by every one by whom it is violated. The law is now to be applied to the case of every individual, according to what is written about him in the books which have been already mentioned. If he has perfectly obeyed the law, then it adjudges him to everlasting life; but if he has transgressed it, it condemns him to everlasting death. And if he has lived under the dispensation of the gospel, this will only exceedingly aggravate his guilt, and increase the severity of his punishment; for ‘this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.’

But, by these books the whole human race must be found guilty before God. There is, therefore, another book opened, which is the Book of Life, in which are inscribed the names of all those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who are consequently washed in His blood, and clothed in His righteousness, and sanctified by His Spirit. And all whose names God himself has written in the book of life, shall be acquitted in the last day, and declared to be the heirs of eternal glory. They have been sinners as well as

others, but their sins were all washed away in the blood of the Lamb. They were in themselves as destitute of righteousness as any of the human race, but by faith the righteousness of Emmanuel became theirs. They were corrupt and unholy as others, but they were renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. In a word they were once dead in trespasses and sins, but they were restored to spiritual life; and, therefore, they have been publicly acknowledged to have a valid title to the honour and happiness of the heavenly world. These, then, are the books which are to be opened at the judgment of the great day, and the sentence pronounced on all mankind will exactly correspond with what is written in these books; but there will be witnesses called, as well as books produced, to give evidence at the judgment seat of Christ.

The omniscient heart-searching God will himself be the chief witness, and He is infinitely qualified to give evidence on this grand occasion. He knows most perfectly and minutely the whole history of every individual before him, and He will rehearse the history before an assembled universe, so that the righteousness of the sentence pronounced shall be made manifest to all intelligent beings. These are his own words, ‘And I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and, against those that oppress the hireling in his wages the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not Me, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ Let sinners seriously consider that

there is One every moment present with him, most carefully observing him, and putting down everything He sees in the book of His remembrance, and who shall give evidence against them in this great day. And His evidence must be complete and impartial ; and none can dare to call it in question.

Further, every man's own conscience will be a witness, whose testimony will exactly coincide with that of the Great Searcher of hearts. Men are now accustomed to stifle her warning voice, and to disregard her solemn admonitions ; but then they will be compelled to listen, while she reminds them of all their forgetfulness of God—of all their ungratefulness for His unwearied kindness—of all their abuse of His sparing mercies—of all their neglect of the great salvation—of all their worldliness and sensuality—of all pride and ungodliness. What would be their feelings now, if, before a large assembly of their fellow men, one were to stand up and recite their whole past history, all their thoughts and purposes, desires and aims, and words and actions. But their conscience, and the God of heaven will do so before all men, and angels, and devils. And then their hearts will be inconceivably corrupt and loathsome, and they will become the objects of universal abhorrence. The light of God's countenance will then be poured even upon their secret sins, and they shall be known and read by all men. They themselves shall be covered with such confusion that they would willingly be hidden, if that were possible, even in the depths of hell.

Faithful ministers, too, will be summoned to give

evidence against their people, who have rejected the message which they have brought to them in the name of the Lord. And what awful testimony will they have to give against those to whom the ministry has proved only the savour of death unto death ! These are the persons whom we often and very solemnly warned to flee from the wrath to come ; whom we often and earnestly invited to come to the Lord Jesus, that they might obtain salvation. Sabbath after Sabbath, and yearafter year, we pressed, and pressed upon their attention the great realities of death, and judgment, and eternity ; and we entreated them, by every consideration that was most powerful and affecting, to seek the salvation of their souls ; and in regard to them, we laboured in vain, and spent our strength for nought. They would not come to Christ, that they might have life. On the other hand, the people will bear witness against those ministers who have not clearly declared to them the truth as it is in Jesus, who have allowed them to perish for lack of knowledge, and whose garments are stained with the blood of their ruined souls.

Companions in sin, too, will bear witness against each other. Ananias will reproach Sapphira, and Sapphira will reproach Ananias. They now agree together to trample on God's law, and to gratify their sinful passions ; but they will eagerly proclaim each other's guilt, when standing before God. They are mutual tempters now ; but they will be mutual accusers hereafter. It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret now ; but they

will be all published in the great day of accounts. There will then be the most abundant and satisfactory evidence produced in regard to the real character of every individual who will stand before the great white throne, and the judgment founded on the evidence will be a righteous judgment, and will be acknowledged to be so by all on whom it is pronounced, whether saint or sinner.





Part Third.

PASTORAL ADDRESSES TO YOUNG MEN.

I KINGS xviii. 12.—“ But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.”

HE rose is a beautiful object even when seen in the garden, surrounded with other flowers ; but it appears peculiarly beautiful when it is observed amidst a wilderness of thorns. And in like manner true piety is lovely wherever it is found ; but it is invested with more than ordinary charms, when it is beheld in situations most unfavourable to its existence and its growth. Obadiah, of whom it is said that he feared the Lord greatly, would have been highly worthy of esteem and affection in any circumstances in which he could have been placed ; but viewed as maintaining his principles, and acting in accordance with them in the court of the impious Ahab, and the still more impious Jezebel, he is pre-eminently deserving of admiration and honour. In the palace

and in the employment of Jehoshaphat the pious King of Judah, such a man might have been looked for ; but who could have expected to meet such a person in the service of the idolatrous, profane, and profligate king of Israel ? It must indeed have been attended with the greatest difficulty to be faithful to his God in such a situation ; but even here his piety shone with peculiar brilliancy, and he did not hesitate to expose himself to the fierce resentment of the unprincipled Jezebel, by concealing and feeding a hundred of the Lord's prophets, whom she had doomed to destruction. He thus gave a most decisive proof of the reality and the vigour of his piety, and his name will be transmitted with honour to all generations, as one who was not afraid to avow himself on the Lord's side, even in the worst of times. Ahab must have greatly disliked him on account of his inflexible adherence to the worship and cause of Jehovah ; but he highly valued him as a servant, in whose integrity he could place unlimited confidence. He was a man whose sterling excellence of character had been always known and appreciated ; "he had," he tells us, in the words of the text, 'feared the Lord from his youth.' What a delightful reflection that must have been to Obadiah, and what a cause of gratitude to God, who had inclined him early to devote himself to his service ! How many snares and temptations did he thus escape ! How much peace and comfort did he thus enjoy ! How honourable a reputation did he thus acquire, and what a career of usefulness did he thus run ! And what a noble example has he left behind him, of the

value and importance of true religion ! Happy they, who, like him, have early begun to remember and serve their Creator; and who, at every future period of life, are enabled to say, ‘I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.’ And is not Jehovah infinitely worthy of being thus reverenced, and loved, and worshipped, and served? And is it possible for the young to form a wiser and a nobler purpose, than to resolve to fear the Lord from their youth? Is it possible for them by any other means to attain real excellence of character, or to enjoy real felicity?

Do you, then, my young friends, fear the Lord? or in other words, do you regard Him with profound veneration? Do you yield submission to his authority? Do you trust in His mercy through Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and your restoration to His favour? Is it your grand aim to please and honour Him? Are you devoting yourselves to His service? Do you daily and devoutly read His holy word, in order that you may become wise unto salvation? Do you love the habitation of His house, and the place where His honour dwelleth? Do you regularly engage in the exercises of His worship, and do you constantly endeavour in the strength of His grace, to approve yourselves to Him, on whom you entirely depend for life, and breath, and all things?

What answer are you able to give to such questions as these, in the presence of the Great Searcher of hearts, who knows perfectly all your thoughts, and words, and actions? Does conscience oblige you to acknowledge that you are destitute of any such dispositions towards

God, and of any such desires to serve and glorify Him ? Are you compelled, on the contrary, to admit that you are much more afraid of the censure of man than of the displeasure of God ; and that you love carnal pleasures and worldly objects more than Him ? Ah ! then, you are not to be ranked among that divinely honoured and peculiarly happy class to which Obadiah belonged. You are spending the precious season of youth in the service of sin and the world, and you will at length receive the wages which they are accustomed to give. You are in the situation of those whom the inspired writer thus addresses, ‘ Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk thou in the way of thine heart, and after the sight of thine eyes ; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.’

But, I trust there are other young persons among us, who do, like Obadiah, fear the Lord, and are not ashamed to be known to fear Him ; who are deeply sensible of their obligations to that grace which has made them to differ from others, and who are earnestly desirous of exemplifying, in every situation in which they can be placed, the power of that divine principle which has been implanted in their hearts. It is, therefore, my intention, in humble dependence on the grace of the Holy Spirit, to contemplate the young in various circumstances and situations, and to show how true religion will operate on their hearts and conduct in these various conditions. My young friends, you constitute a very important and interesting part of the

flock committed to my care ; and it is my sincere desire and prayer that I may be enabled to suggest to you such considerations, and present to you such views of divine truth, as will be profitable for your direction, comfort, and encouragement, while walking in the narrow way that leadeth unto life.

First, then, let us contemplate the religious young man, while residing under his parents' roof. Now, the whole duty that God requires of you in this situation, is expressed in Scripture in *one* beautiful word, '*Honour thy father and thy mother.*' If, therefore, you regard the authority of God as paramount and supreme, you will regard your parents with sincere affection—you will manifest a reverential subjection to their authority—you will carefully observe the rules which they have prescribed for the regulation of the family ; and you will endeavour, by every means in your power, to promote the comfort and happiness of the domestic circle.

I. If in youth you fear the Lord, you will love your parents. If it be required that a man who loves God, should love his brother also, surely it must be most emphatically required that one who loves God, should also love his parents—his parents who stand to him in so near and endearing a relation—his parents who have watched over him so tenderly during the period of helpless infancy—his parents who feel so deep an interest in his welfare, and who have rendered services to him which he can never adequately requite. To treat your parents with coldness and disrespect, to show no disposition to please and gratify them, to be indifferent alike either to their approbation or censure,

evince not only a total want of all true religion, but even of those feelings which are required by the current morality of the world. You will feel the force of this appeal, ‘What do ye do in this respect more than others,’ who make no pretensions to ‘the fear of the Lord?’ And it will be your constant endeavour to prove that, while they are actuated merely by natural feelings, you are also under the influence of religious principle, and that the affection you entertain for your parents, is thereby purified, directed, and strengthened. If your parents are themselves pious and devout, then your obligations to love them are immense and incalculable, and their claims to your warmest affection are of the strongest nature. But even though this unhappily should not be the case, still there are many powerful reasons why you should love them, and manifest that love in every way which is fitted to recommend the religion you profess. It will be your constant aim, in such circumstances, so to please and gratify them in every way in which you can do it, consistently with a good conscience, that your worldly-minded irreligious parents may be obliged to say—Our son has adopted some very extraordinary notions; he has become unnecessarily strict and precise in many things; he abstains from amusements which we think perfectly innocent, and he spends far too much of his time in religious employments; but then he is so affectionate and dutiful, he is so ready to consult our wishes in everything, except in regard to his attention to religion, and he so cheerfully performs every service we require of him, that we cannot but express

our high approbation of his conduct. There must surely be something more excellent in the principles which he has adopted than we have hitherto been willing to admit. Had the parents of Obadiah conformed to the reigning idolatry, they no doubt would have thought their son unnecessarily rigid and scrupulous, and wished him to follow their example, but they could not but admire and esteem him, when they found that none was so distinguished as he for the honour, love, and obedience which he rendered to them.

2. If you fear the Lord, you will manifest a reverential subjection to the authority of your parents. You will feel the force of these divine injunctions, ‘Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right:’ ‘Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.’ It will be an established principle in your minds, that so long as your father and mother require nothing of you which is contrary to the will of God, you are bound to yield obedience, and to do so cheerfully as to the Lord. You will not set your opinion in opposition to theirs, nor constitute yourselves the judges of what it is reasonable that you should perform; but, on the contrary, when they have laid their commands on you, you will immediately and willingly obey them. You will not, as many, alas! do, enter into an unseemly disputation with your parents in regard to the exercise of their authority, nor submit to it with evident reluctance and sullenness, nor perform carelessly and imperfectly what they have required you to do; but, shewing them all becoming deference

and respect, you will proceed without delay, and without reserve, to comply with their injunctions. And thus you will prove that your obedience proceeds from a deeply rooted principle of regard to the authority of God's law, and you will give a very beautiful and instructive example to all around you of the benign influence of the religion of Jesus.

3. If you fear the Lord, you will carefully observe the regulations which they have prescribed for the government of the family. In every well ordered household, a certain department of duty is assigned to every individual, and the time and manner in which he is to perform the service allotted to him, are determined. There are certain fixed seasons for work, for meals, for the worship of God, and for coming home in the evening. Now, to every thing of this nature enjoined by parental authority, you will feel yourselves bound strictly to conform—you will beware of marring the arrangements which have been appointed, by carelessness, or neglect, or by preferring any pursuit or amusement of your own—you will not consider it a matter of little consequence whether you attend to these things or not, and disregard them whenever they may happen to interfere with your own convenience or inclination ; but, remembering that, while you are under you parents' roof, it is imperatively required of you to comply with the rules which they have laid down for the regulation of their household, it will be your constant study to act agreeably to their injunctions.

And let me particularly press upon your attention

the vast importance to your reputation, your safety, your comfort, and your usefulness, of being at home at the proper hour in the evening. It is then that young men are exposed to peculiar danger—it is then that snares of every kind are laid in their way—it is then that the most vigorous efforts are made to undermine their principles, to corrupt their hearts, and to persuade them to enter on the forbidden paths of sensual gratification. However deep the impression divine truth may have made upon your minds, that impression will soon be weakened and altogether effaced, if you are often found in the evenings in the society of the gay, the thoughtless, and the irreligious. It is a most melancholy indication of a young man's approaching ruin, when he begins to keep late hours, and when he finds it necessary to exercise his ingenuity in inventing excuses for returning home at night long after the proper season.

Is this the case, my young friends, of any of you? Are you conscious that you are becoming fond of the society of those who are accustomed to spend their evenings in the enjoyment of what they call pleasure and amusement, and who unwillingly return to their homes even at the midnight hour? Are you afraid that your parents should know with what companions you have been associating, and in what manner you have been employed after you have been released from the business of the day? And are you beginning to use deceit and falsehood in order to conceal from them the habits which you are forming, and the sinful gratifications in which you are indulging? Or, though you

are aware that they are acquainted with the way in which you are acting, and decidedly disapprove of it, and enjoin you in the strongest terms to be home at the appointed hour, do you set their authority at nought and persist in the course on which you have entered? Let me assure you, that you are in a situation of the greatest danger, both in regard to your temporal and spiritual welfare. You are just running that career which has proved fatal to thousands and tens of thousands of once hopeful and promising young men, who might have been the joy of their parents, the delight of the family circle, and the ornament of society; but who, by their irregular, intemperate, and dissipated habits, have broken the hearts of their most affectionate friends, and reduced themselves to poverty, degradation, and ruin. You may at present, while your passions are excited and inflamed, and while you can obtain the means of indulgence, wilfully shut your eyes, and refuse to look at the consequences which must inevitably result from the mode of life which you are now pursuing; but as certainly as 'he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption,' so certainly shall you eat of the fruit of your own ways and be filled with your own devices. Do not suppose that heaven's unalterable laws shall be changed, in order that you may enjoy the pleasures of sin, without tasting of those bitter thoughts which they afterwards yield. Do not flatter yourselves with the vain idea that you can dissolve the connection which God has established between sin and misery. Do not imagine that though you trample on God's

authority, you shall escape God's righteous judgments. At present you give much more credit to the statements of your thoughtless companions, who have a deep interest in deceiving you, than to the declarations of God's word, and to the testimony of God's servants. But the time is not far distant when you shall be taught by painful experience, if you will not otherwise learn the lesson, that "the way of transgressors is hard," and that "a companion of fools," that is, of thoughtless, irreligious, and wicked men, "shall be destroyed." I charge you, therefore, my young friends, as you value your reputation, your comfort, your health, your souls, that you beware of the practice to which I have been adverting. I am aware, that in the ardour of youth, you are ready to think that such regular habits as I have been recommending would be an intolerable restraint, and prevent you from enjoying those gratifications for which you have so keen a relish. But I entreat you calmly, and seriously, and prayerfully to consider this matter, and inquire, who have proved the most esteemed and honoured members of society—who have enjoyed most real and enduring happiness? those who have spent their evenings in the society of the gay, and the intemperate, and the profligate, and have been accustomed, in violation of all family order, to return to their homes at a late hour of the night, or at an early hour in the morning? or those who have devoted their hours of leisure to the improvement of their minds, who have been distinguished by their regular, sober, and industrious habits, and who have enjoyed

their sweetest pleasures under their own paternal roof? Ah! how many examples are continually occurring of young persons whose prospects in life have been utterly blighted, who have been subjected to the greatest hardships and privations, or who have brought themselves to an untimely grave by those dissipated habits which they have acquired, by being abroad at unseasonable hours! Beware of imitating their example, and seek your happiness in higher and nobler enjoyments than they. Remember that the approbation of God and your own conscience is of infinitely greater importance to you than the flattery and applause of those who desire to lead you astray; and that, if they should succeed in deceiving and ruining you, you will find that all their protestations of friendship have been merely the offspring of the lips, and that from them you need not expect either sympathy or relief. If, like Obadiah, you fear the Lord in your youth, the scene of your most exquisite pleasures will be your own home, not the haunts of intemperance, revelry, and dissipation.

4. If you fear the Lord, you will endeavour to promote the happiness of the whole family, by the self-denial, meekness, and generosity, which you are at all times ready to exercise. Actuated by the benign spirit which a belief of the gospel inspires, and desirous of imitating the lovely example of the Lord Jesus, who pleased not himself; you will not live only to yourselves—you will not consult only your own gratification—you will not haughtily resent any real or fancied injury you may receive, nor selfishly

exclude others from all participation in the benefits and advantages you enjoy ; but, on the contrary, you will be willing to renounce your own personal gratification, whenever it interferes with the comfort of the other members of the family ;—you will be on your guard against uttering rash and hasty expressions, when anything occurs by which you are offended, and you will derive a benevolent pleasure from sharing with your relations all the means of enjoyment which you possess. You will show, in the bosom of your own family, how lovely a thing is the fear of the Lord ; how it subdues pride and selfishness ; how gentle it renders those who are under its influence, and how desirous of diffusing the happiness which it produces. And you will greatly commend to others the religion you profess, and convince them that it is capable of producing the most salutary effects on the hearts of all who truly embrace it.

And now, my young friends, let me ask you, is it not a good thing, and most becoming the circumstances in which you are placed, thus to think, thus to feel, and thus to act, while under your parents' roof ? Is it not agreeable to the will of God, and is it not calculated to promote your real happiness in this world, and in the world to come ? And does not universal experience prove that the path in which the word of God commands you to walk, is the only path of safety and of peace ? It is indeed deeply to be lamented that, among not a few of the youth of the present day, a spirit of proud independence begins to prevail—a disposition to regard all parental injunctions

and restraints as encroachments on their liberty, and a determination to execute their own plans, and to follow their own inclinations. They flatter themselves that they are now far too enlightened to conform to the regulations which were observed in pious families in former days ; and they think they are warranted to ridicule those Godfearing and excellent young men, who are not ashamed to avow their willing subjection to the Gospel of Christ. Now, I am quite aware, and I rejoice in the fact, that the young in the present day have opportunities for acquiring useful knowledge far greater than were ever before enjoyed ; and I trust they will not neglect to improve these opportunities, nor fail to make a degree of progress in literature, arts, and sciences, corresponding to the advantages with which they are favoured. But, beware of being puffed up with mere human knowledge, or of expecting from it those glorious results which a belief of the Gospel alone can achieve. You are treading very dangerous ground, when any acquisitions you may have made in human knowledge, begin to impair, in your opinion, the authority of the Bible, and dispose you to think that it may yet become an antiquated book. The fool who says in his heart, "Let there be no God," says also, "Let there be no Bible." And glad he is when any discoveries in science seem to throw discredit on the statements and declarations of that blessed book, and consequently to release him from the obligation, which he feels to be so irksome, to comply with its requirements. But ah ! how sadly is science perverted, when, instead of being the hand-

maid, she becomes the rival of the Gospel of Christ ; when, instead of laying all her trophies at the feet of Jesus, and consecrating them to his service, she sets up for herself as an independent Deity, and claims the worship of her votaries, as one that can rectify all the ills that abound in the world, and render it the abode of happiness and love ! And how wretchedly are they deluded, who imagine that the depravity of man's heart is to be removed, and that the seeds of all good dispositions are to be sown in it, by the general diffusion of human learning and science ! That can be accomplished only by the mighty power of God producing a belief of the truth as it is in Jesus. To all who attempt to expel the evil spirit which has taken possession of the soul of man, by any schemes which they themselves have devised, it scornfully says, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye ?" Satan scoffs at the puny attempts of men of mere learning and science, to overthrow his long established empire. They possess no weapons of which he entertains the least dread, and which he cannot with the utmost ease turn to his own account. They are not the persons who have ever made any inroads on his kingdom, or have snatched his miserable victims from his grasp. What have all the labours of philosophers and men of science ever done for the world lying in wickedness, in comparison with that which the word of God has done for it ? Where are the learned men, whose views, and discoveries, and efforts have been the means of producing a complete and most glorious change on the character of persons the most depraved,

and of rendering them devout, and benevolent, and happy? What countries have they visited, in order to rescue the inhabitants from idolatry and superstition? What sacrifices have they made, what self-denial have they exercised, in order to promote the happiness of their fellow-men, who are sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death? Verily, if nothing more effectual had been done for the illumination and improvement of mankind, than that which men of learning and science have attempted, they must all have continued in nature's darkness and nature's misery, and perished in their sins. But the word of the Lord, declared by His servants, and accompanied by the omnipotent agency of His spirit, has converted many a waste-howling wilderness into an Eden, and many a dreary desert into a garden of the Lord. It has dispelled the thickest moral darkness; it has softened the hardest heart; it has subdued the most depraved nature; it has given peace to the most wretched and restless spirit; it has shed the richest blessings on earth; and it has multiplied the inhabitants of heaven.

Let nothing, then, for a moment be permitted to undermine your belief in the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures. The word of the Lord, as contained in His own book, has been transmitted pure and entire from age to age; and every attack which has been made upon it, has only more clearly shown its immovable stability, and the impotent malice of its adversaries. It resembles a ponderous and lofty rock rising in majestic grandeur from the

midst of the ocean, which continues unmoved from age to age, while the raging billows dash and foam and exhaust their strength at its base. "The counsel of the Lord that shall stand, and the thoughts of His heart to all generations." And, when the whole system of the universe is involved in the general and final conflagration, when the heavens are passing away with a great noise, and the elements are melting with fervent heat, the word of the Lord will be only receiving its most glorious accomplishment.

Secondly, Let us contemplate the young when they first make a public profession of religion by sitting down at the table of the Lord. That, my young friends, was a very solemn and interesting moment of your lives, when for the first time you took into your hands the sacred memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood, when you gratefully acknowledged your obligations to Him, who loved you and gave Himself for you ; and when you firmly resolved, in dependence on His grace, to devote yourselves unreservedly to His service and glory. Then, perhaps, in a greater degree than ever you did before, you experienced the feelings of Jacob, when he exclaimed, "How dreadful is this place ! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Then your hearts thrilled with emotion ; then the Lord Jesus appeared to you pre-eminently glorious and lovely ; then the unparalleled grandeur and sublimity of the work of redemption burst upon your view ; and then the language which spontaneously arose from your

hearts to your lips, was this, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?" Some of you have, no doubt, on such an occasion, been much less impressed and affected than others; but all of you whose hearts have been right with God, have felt it to be a high privilege to be admitted to the table of the Lord—a privilege of which you were utterly unworthy; you have been humbled under a sense of your exceeding sinfulness, and you have been conscious of a sincere and earnest desire to do those things which are pleasing to the Lord. And to all who love the Lord Jesus, and love the souls of men, it is a most delightful spectacle to behold you thus engaged; and their hearts ascend in fervent prayer to God, that you may never be left to bring dishonour on the profession which you then made, but that, on the contrary, you may adorn it by a life of cheerful and devoted obedience to your Lord and Saviour.

Remember, then, that "you are not your own, that ye are bought with a price, and that therefore ye ought to glorify God in your body, and your spirit, which are His." Consider what manner of persons you ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness, who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and who have, at His table, in the most solemn manner, enrolled yourselves among His followers. Can there be any motives more powerful than those by which you are stimulated to abound in every good word and work? The Lord of life and glory came down from His throne in heaven, and "gave Himself for you an offering and a sacrifice to God," and "re-

deemed you from the curse of the law, being made a curse for you." In His service there is the purest and noblest enjoyment which is to be found on earth—a peace that passeth all understanding—a hope that maketh not ashamed. In all your conflicts with sin and Satan and the world, He promises you grace suitable to your necessities—in all your difficulties, light and direction—in all your afflictions, strong consolation—in the hour of death, His seasonable and soothing presence—and through eternity, a bliss which is ineffable and unbounded. And when you partook of the memorials of His dying love, you called heaven and earth to witness that you received Him as your Saviour and your Lord, that you reckoned Him worthy of the highest place in your affections, and that it was your determined purpose henceforth to live to the praise of Him who so generously died for you.

And shall it be said, or even suspected, that all these professions were hollow and insincere; that you never truly repented of your sins at the foot of the cross; never cordially received the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; never really surrendered yourselves to be the Lord's? Shall your neighbours and acquaintance have just cause to remark that your language, and spirit, and conduct are sadly inconsistent with the solemn transaction in which you have lately been engaged? Shall it with truth be affirmed of you that no real difference can be discerned between you and the gay thoughtless companions with whom you are found to associate? And shall your own consciences severely reproach you for your neglect of private

prayer, and meditation, and reading of the Scriptures ; for your dislike to all the more spiritual duties of religion ; and for the sinful thoughts which you cherish, and the carnal, unhallowed indulgences to which you are addicted ? O, is it not greatly to be feared that this is the case of not a few who at a communion table have solemnly declared and promised that, whatever others should do, they would serve the Lord ? And ah ! their condition is very deeply to be deplored. The danger to which they are exposed, is very alarming. They are acting contrary to the convictions of their own minds ; they are violating the most solemn vows and engagements ; they are bringing a reproach upon the religion of Christ ; they are hardening their own hearts ; they are provoking the Holy Spirit to abandon them to the unrestrained indulgence of their own sinful inclinations. Ah ! how melancholy it is to see young persons who, having attained their end in being admitted as members of the church, soon throw off the appearances of seriousness which they once assumed, and thus give very affecting evidence that their hearts are not right with God, and that they are still "in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity." Are there any of you, my young friends, who are conscious that this is your condition, that you have been thus dealing treacherously with the Lord ; thus publicly professing a faith in Christ which you never possessed, a love to him which was never excited in your hearts, and a resolution to serve him which you never sincerely formed ? You have the greatest cause to be alarmed, ashamed, and humbled : alarmed, because

you have been so daringly trifling with holy things ; ashamed, because you have been so basely ungrateful towards a Saviour so infinitely gracious ; and humbled, because you have so soon forgotten all your vows and resolutions, and returned to the paths of sin and folly. Can you seriously meditate on the part you are acting, without being confounded before God, and without asking yourselves, What would be my condition through eternity, if I were now to be summoned to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ ? What could I say there in vindication of the course which I am at present pursuing ? Would I presume to open my mouth, or to say a word in my own defence ? O, must I not be covered with confusion there ; must I not hear the awful sentence of condemnation there, a sentence which will proceed from the lips of Him whose disciple I once professed myself to be, and whose dying love I once professed to commemorate ? And can my heart endure, or my hands be strong, in the day when He calleth me to account for so "unworthily eating that bread and drinking that cup."

You perhaps do not like such thoughts and inquiries as these, to be suggested to your minds ; they disturb you in the career you are running, and they mar in some degree those sinful pleasures which you are determined to indulge. You are not, you acknowledge, what you should be ; but you are placed, you say, in peculiar circumstances—you are exposed to peculiar temptations, and you know not how, in your situation, you can act otherwise. But you hope it will not be always so ; and you resolve, that at some future period

you will act more consistently with your professions and obligations. And so, alas! have multitudes resolved, and so have multitudes deceived themselves ; always endeavouring to soothe conscience under the wounds at present inflicted on it, by promising carefully to comply with its dictates in future. And is there not the greatest reason to fear that thus it will prove with you ; that evil propensities daily indulged, will daily acquire greater strength ; that conscience daily subjected to fresh outrages, will at length be seared, and cease to molest you ; that your hearts, which you are daily hardening, will at length become thoroughly hardened ; and that by the daily habit of resisting the authority of God's word, you will ere long become so familiar with its most awful and affecting truths, that you can hear them without concern, and without emotion ? Are not illustrations of the truth of these remarks often presented to us in the case of persons who, when they first approached to the table of the Lord, seemed to be seriously impressed with the truths of God's word ; and who excited in the minds of ministers and pious friends considerable hopes that they had chosen the good part which would not be taken from them ; but who are now characterised by the coldness and indifference with which they observe religious services, and the eagerness with which they are devoting themselves to the pursuits, and gratifications, and amusements of this present world ? O, yes ; the examples are numerous, of persons who once exhibited very promising appearances of future excellence as members of

Christ's Church, who are now like withered and blasted trees, which will, there is reason to fear, be cut down as cumberers of the ground, and cast as fuel into the fire that never shall be quenched. O, then, my young friends, beware of imitating the example of those who are drawing back unto perdition ; and let it be your constant aim and endeavour, in dependence on the grace of God, to cultivate all those graces which ought to adorn the Christian character, and to give proof to all around you that you are not ashamed to be considered the pledged, covenanted, faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then will you, at every future period of your existence, look back with sacred delight on the hallowed season, when you first took your place at the table of the Lord ; and when, amidst all the impressive solemnities of that most interesting occasion, "you joined yourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, not to be forgotten."

Thirdly, Let us contemplate young men who fear the Lord, when they have commenced the active business of life. Your religion must now be brought into practical operation ; you must now demonstrate that it is a living and most powerful principle within you, by which you are at all times disposed cheerfully and faithfully to perform all the duties incumbent on you in the situation in which you are placed. Are you in the employment of others—as servants, or apprentices, or clerks, or shopmen, or in any other capacity ? Then you will attentively and diligently do the work which is required of you ; you will be civil and oblig-

ing in your deportment ; you will be faithful to the trust reposed in you ; and you will be as anxious to promote your masters' interests, by all proper and prudent methods, as if they were your own.

1. You will, I say, be diligent and attentive. You will not be among the number of those whom the Apostle describes as rendering only eye service, as men-pleasers ; but you will act as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will "doing service as unto the Lord, and not unto men." You will beware of being chargeable with negligence and sloth, as most dishonouring to your Christian profession. While some content themselves with maintaining the appearance of diligence and attention, when they know that they are carefully watched ; you will at all times and in all circumstances carefully and actively perform the duties assigned to you, so that your employer may be fully assured that whatever he enjoins you to do, will be promptly and carefully performed.

2. You will be civil and obliging in your deportment. You will not only do what is required of you, but you will do it in that manner which is most pleasing to those whom you serve. A jewel is precious, even when it is enclosed in a rough exterior ; but it is still more precious, and it shines with a much clearer lustre, when it is smoothed and polished. So a real Christian is far more excellent than his irreligious neighbour, even though he may have little of that politeness of address, and blandness of manner, by which some are distinguished. But there is no reason

why a servant of Christ should not in this respect, as well as in every other, be superior to mere men of the world. There is a good-will to men inspired by the gospel, which has a powerful tendency to render those who are under its influence civil and obliging ; and they are bound to cultivate this disposition, and to make themselves as agreeable as possible to those with whom they converse. It is remarkable how successful many are in acquiring a pleasing manner, who have no other object in view than to promote their own selfish interests, and who, if this motive should cease to operate, would soon display a haughty and surly temper. But all who are true Christians will strive to be courteous on Christian principle, and to possess in reality that which polite men of the world have only in appearance.

3. You will be faithful to the trust reposed in you. You will abhor the thought of appropriating to yourselves the least portion of your master's property ; and you will preserve it as carefully as if it were your own ; you will instantly and indignantly repel every temptation to dishonesty, even in regard to things which may appear to be of a very trifling nature ; and you will show all good fidelity. The young man who ventures to abstract anything for a time, with the promise and intention of afterwards replacing it, is entering upon a most dangerous course, which has proved fatal to many, and which, he has every reason to fear, will prove fatal to him. He is just suffering the wicked one to enter into his soul, and to entangle him in his net ; and he will find, to his sad experience, that it is

easier far to admit than to dislodge him ; to put himself into his power than to extricate himself from his toils. One sinful step renders it necessary for him to take another ; and a second prepares the way for a third, and a third impels to a fourth, from which, before he took the first, he would have shrunk back with horror. He who yields to the first temptation, should remember that he thus prepares himself for yielding to every other ; and that, in these circumstances, he knows not how far Satan and a wicked heart may prompt him to go astray. I trust, my young friends, that you will be ever distinguished for the most scrupulous honesty, for the most inviolable integrity. I trust your employers will always feel themselves warranted to place in you the most unsuspecting confidence, and that you will never give them reason to lament that their confidence has been misplaced and abused.

How alarming the condition of those young men who have begun to associate with unprincipled and worthless companions, and to acquire a taste for expensive pleasures ; who, finding that their resources are not equal to their expenditure, yield to the temptation of betraying their trust, and of basely appropriating to themselves the property of their masters ! Is this an uncommon thing in our large towns ? Are there no young men who have begun a career of intemperate and vicious indulgence, who have exposed themselves to disgrace and ruin, by dishonestly laying hands on the property of their parents or employers, and spending it in the society of the

loose and the dissipated? I fear there are; and their condition is one of extreme danger, which every well-disposed youth will most carefully avoid. I need not say how utterly inconsistent such a practice is with the least pretensions to Christian character; it is severely condemned, even by the ordinary morality of the world. And all who are conscious that they are chargeable with it may be assured, that though for a time they may conceal their guilt, it will sooner or later be discovered; and that they will be subjected to all the degradation and punishment which they so justly deserve.

O let me entreat all of you to beware of making the least approaches to such a condition, or of deviating, even by a hair-breadth, from the straight path of integrity and honour. Let your whole conduct be so regulated by the principles of the gospel of Christ, that it may be evident to all, that the property of others is not only safe in your hands, but that you will, by your diligence and activity, endeavour to increase it. And thus you will greatly adorn the religion you profess; you will secure the esteem and confidence of your employers; you will enjoy the testimony of an approving conscience; and you will adopt the most certain and effectual method of promoting your own temporal interests. What a beautiful and instructive example of the fidelity we have been recommending, is presented to you in the conduct of Joseph, and how worthy of your most careful imitation. So unbounded, we are told, was the confidence which his master reposed in him, that he com-

mitted the whole management of his property into his hands, and knew not aught he had save the bread that he did eat. Joseph feared the Lord, and therefore Joseph was diligent in business and fervent in spirit. Joseph feared the Lord, and it was his constant study to approve himself to the great Searcher of hearts. Joseph feared the Lord, and he was earnestly desirous that others should fear him too. Let it then be your whole aim to possess and to exemplify that high-toned integrity which will dispose you instantly, and decidedly, and indignantly to spurn away from you every temptation to dishonesty, and which will secure for you the unlimited confidence of all by whom you are employed.

Fourthly, Let us next contemplate the young man who fears the Lord, when he has removed to a distance from his home, or gone to a foreign country. Such a change in the condition of the young is of very frequent occurrence. There are many who have been admitted as members of this congregation, who are now scattered in various parts of the world; and as the same thing is happening every year, it is necessary to put the young on their guard against the temptations to which they are often exposed when they leave their paternal roof, and enter upon new scenes, and form new connections. To pious parents it is a very anxious and trying season, when a beloved son is about to be removed from their inspection, and to repair to another place, perhaps the metropolis of the land, where so many once promising youths have been led astray and ruined. Most earnestly do they warn him

of the dangers with which he will be surrounded ; most affectionately do they bid him farewell ; and when he is removed out of their sight, their fervent prayers ascend to heaven, that God would watch over him, and give him the grace which he needs in the circumstances in which he is about to be placed. And there is abundant cause for their solicitude ; for the youth who has hitherto preserved a character unstained, is about to live in a city where the principles of thousands have been corrupted, and where they have abandoned all the regular and religious habits in which they have been trained.

A young man, therefore, in such circumstances, should say to himself, "I am now about to be removed from the affectionate care of my parents to another and a very different sphere, in which I shall meet with many and powerful temptations, which I am assured have proved fatal to multitudes, who once, like myself, shrank with abhorrence from the paths of vice, but who have at length broken their parents' hearts, and in some instances brought their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. O what if I should prove like one of them ; if I should be seduced by the multiplied allurements to sin by which I shall be tempted ; if I should blast all the pleasing hopes which have been formed of me ; if, after having professed myself to be a disciple of Jesus, I should be ashamed of him and of his service, and become the companion of those who renounce his authority and walk after the lusts of their own hearts ! How alarming the thought ! The Lord preserve my feet

from falling, the Lord preserve my going out and my coming in." There is the greatest reason why you should cherish such feelings, and present such petitions, when you are removed from your home and enter upon new scenes; for the sincerity of your piety, and the energy of your resolution will then be put to the severest test, and if you have not decidedly surrendered yourselves to be the servants of the Lord, there is great reason to fear that you will yield to the temptations by which you will be assailed.

You will then perhaps be placed in the same shop, or counting-house, or other place of business, or lodge in the same room, with an unprincipled and pleasure-loving youth, who is continually contriving schemes of self-indulgence and amusement, and who will employ all the influence he can exert, and all the arts he can command, to persuade you to seek enjoyment from the same sources. He is perhaps accustomed to spend his Sabbaths in making excursions of pleasure to the neighbouring villages; and he tells you that it is absolutely necessary for your health, that, after the close confinement of the week, you should breathe the pure air of the country, and that it is absurd to think of maintaining the same strict observance of the Sabbath in the capital as in the provinces—that there you must conform in a great measure to prevailing habits, otherwise you will be thrust out of society altogether. He is fond, too, of the excitement of the tavern; and he invites you to meet in the evening with some choice young men, with whose company you will be greatly delighted, and with whom, he is persuaded if you were

once to meet, you would wish to meet again. And he seems to be so desirous of promoting your happiness, and his manner of addressing you appears to be so kind, that you are strongly inclined to accompany him. He is an admirer and a frequenter of the theatre, also, that most fascinating temple of Satan, and he draws a most enchanting picture of the scenes which are there exhibited, and of the pleasure which is there enjoyed. He combats with the greatest skill all your objections ; he assures you that persons of the highest respectability are often seen there, and that nothing but ignorance and foolish prejudice would prevent any one from enjoying those refined and exquisite entertainments, which are there provided. "Well," says he, while you are still reluctant and hesitating to consent, "come with me only this once, and see with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears, and judge for yourself; and if you then think the theatre to be so dangerous a place, I will never urge you to go thither again." By such considerations and solicitations as these, many young men are prevailed on, though perhaps at first with a trembling heart, to enter within the walls of a theatre ; but once there, they are so captivated with the splendour and fascination of the scene presented to their view, that it does not require much entreaty to persuade them to return a second and a third time. Ere long they become passionately fond of such entertainments, and they resolve to enjoy them as often as their means and their time will permit. Then, after the excitement of the play, they are without much difficulty persuaded to seek refreshment in

some of the taverns, by which the theatre is surrounded, and thence at length to places more infamous still. Thus their principles are gradually subverted, and they abandon themselves to the slavery of sin. They contract expensive habits, and are strongly tempted to acquire by dishonesty the means of indulgence. Then they are dismissed by their employers, and are often reduced to the greatest straits and difficulties, and begin to feel that the way of transgressors is hard. An excellent writer thus forcibly describes the danger to which young men are exposed, by being brought into close contact with unprincipled companions: "*No evil companions,*" says he, "*are to be so much dreaded, as those who dwell under the same roof;*" and how frequently is it the unhappy lot of young men piously brought up, and in every respect hopeful as to morality, and perhaps as to piety also, to be fixed in the same house, to eat at the same table, to sleep in the same room, perhaps in the same bed, as some youths of vicious and infidel principles. They are thus brought into immediate contact with sin, and exposed at once to all the virulence of its contagion; and what strength of moral constitution does it require to resist the danger. They breathe an infected atmosphere, and continually touch a pestilential person. Take the testimony of one who left his father's house, strictly moral, and with much veneration for religion, but whose dark and winding course led him at last into the vicinity of the gallows.—"*In my master's house,*" says he, "*there were three young men employed besides myself. One of them, a gay, respectable*

youth, was a great favourite with my employer. He was my bedfellow. Of course this led to intimacy, and from him I received the first disposition to extravagance and dress, which laid the foundation of my ruin. He was extremely prodigal in his habits ; but from the respectability of his connections, no suspicions were excited that his supplies were not equal to his expenses. By him I became gradually familiarized to scenes of dissipation, which soon exceeded my means of support; but I never dreamed of having recourse to dishonest means to meet expensive indulgences. I soon found that I should be involved in great difficulties, and began to withdraw from his company, and associated as much as possible with my brother and a cousin of mine in the city.

" A circumstance, however, soon occurred, which threw the forbidden fruit in my way, and my integrity could not resist the temptation. After being about two years in my situation, I was sent on one occasion with a parcel to a gentleman, for which I was to receive the money, about two pounds. Such parts of the business had often fallen to my lot. On this occasion, however, in the hurry of business, without the least dishonesty of intention, I forgot to give the money to my employer, and did not discover the note in my pocket till some time afterwards, several weeks at least. I was much alarmed at the circumstances, and knew not how to act. I was afraid to mention the matter to any one. I was determined to let the note remain where it was, and if no inquiry was made, at length to appropriate the money to myself. Thus

I fell into the snare. And thus he commenced a sad career of dishonesty, to which he was introduced by a bad companion."

"I might mention," continues the same author, "another case illustrative of the same fact, of the danger of a bad companion in the house; but happily the danger was escaped in this instance. I knew a youth, whose parents felt the greatest solicitude for their child, whom they were about to place from home. He had been carefully educated from his earliest years in habits of morality and piety. His school had been selected with special reference to the plan laid down at home, for the formation of his character. But now this lovely youth, for he was most lovely, must leave home, and go out into the world. How anxiously did the father read the advertisements to find one which commanded all the advantages of a pious master and a lively minister. He succeeded, and a most excellent Christian he found with whom to place his son. The family was what a Christian family should be; and then the other apprentice, he was also supposed to be all that could be wished as a companion for a youth just quitting the parental roof, for he was the son of a minister, and unsuspected as to his principles. Many months, however, had not passed before the minister received a letter from the heart-stricken mother, to say she had heard from her child, stating that his soul was in imminent peril. He had been under religious impressions, and in much concern about his eternal welfare; but his companion proved to be a concealed infidel—concealed, I mean,

from his father and his master. Nightly when they retired to rest was this deceiver and tempter instilling into the mind of his younger companion his artful objections against Christianity, and endeavouring to poison him with infidelity. As he could bear it, his mind was assailed by one cavil after another, till the poor boy, unable to endure it any longer, yet afraid to disclose it, wrote home to his mother, exclaiming in an agony, ‘O mother, I am lost, I am lost, unless you pray for me!’ Horror-struck, she immediately addressed the minister upon the subject; and by their joint labours, and the blessing of God upon them, this youth was snatched from the fangs of the destroyer. He acted most wisely in making his parents acquainted with his situation, and imploring their counsel and help. A little longer, and he would probably have been carried off in triumph, and perhaps have been ruined for both worlds.’

Oh, that I could select words sufficiently emphatic to express my entreaties to you, to beware of evil companions out of the house, but especially *in* it! Oh, could you see but the thousandth part of the miserable ghosts that have passed to the regions of unutterable woe, by the influence of bad associates, what a comment would their damnation be upon the passage, ‘A companion of fools shall be destroyed!’ What a melancholy consideration it is, that so many young men, when they go from home, leave behind them what is essential to their welfare, that they carry not along with them their moral and religious habits, and that when they become their own masters, and

can do what they please without restraint, they plunge into all those scenes of folly, amusement, and sin, in which our large towns so greatly abound.

O let me solemnly charge all who may be placed in such circumstances, to beware of the dangers to which you are exposed. Let me remind young men who fear the Lord, that now is the time for giving the most decisive proof of the reality and the strength of your religious principles. And when gay and thoughtless youths suggest to you, that you may indulge yourselves without fear and without restraint, say to yourselves solemnly, "Thou God seest me." And when you are tempted to the commission of any of those sins to which youthful passions so strongly incline you, let your language be that of Joseph of old, "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" O beware of doing, in His presence, that which you would not venture to do under the eye of a parent or a master. Think how vain it is to expect to be happy, while conscience remonstrates, and God condemns, and fear of discovery alarms. Let it be your fixed and constant aim to approve yourselves to the great Searcher of hearts, "whose favour is life, and whose loving-kindness is better than life." Anticipate the proceedings of that infinitely solemn day, when you must render an account of the deeds done in the body, when all the hidden things of darkness shall be revealed, and when those who now ridicule the choice you have made shall be covered with confusion; and consider how rapturous will be your joy, when He that sitteth upon the throne shall place you upon His own

right hand, and say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord." Then, O then, you will exult in the thought, that at home and abroad, by night and by day, at all times and in all circumstances, you acted as in the presence of Him who now acknowledges and honours you as His devoted disciples, and who now receives you to Himself, that where He is, there you may be also.

Fifthly, Let us contemplate the young man who fears the Lord, when about to select for himself a companion for life—a very interesting and important season truly, and one which should lead to much more serious thought and earnest prayer than it usually does. You are about to form a connection of a most intimate and endearing nature—a connection on which the respectability, the comfort, the happiness of your whole future life will in a great measure depend—and a connection which, when once formed, death only, or something worse than death, can dissolve. And if, when you intend to enter into even a temporary relation to one of your fellow-creatures ; if, for instance, when you are going to engage a female servant, you think it necessary to make careful inquiries in regard to her character, her habits, her temper, and her suitableness for the work which you are to assign to her ; how much more necessary it is that you pause, and consider, and inquire, and pray, before you enter into that union with one of your fellow-creatures, which will exert a very powerful influence, either for weal or for woe, on the whole of your future destiny, and

which will continue till one of the parties is removed from time into eternity. Permit me, then, to suggest to you some such counsels and directions as the following, in regard to this matter, which, though often in conversation made the subject of jocularity, is yet so vitally important as to demand and deserve your most serious consideration.

In the first place, I counsel you to make it the subject of frequent and earnest prayer to God, that you may be led, in the course of His providence, to form such a connection as he will approve and bless. If it be required of you in all your ways to acknowledge God, who has the hearts of all His creatures in His hand, and all events at His disposal, that He may direct your steps; surely, when you have such an object in view, it is peculiarly necessary to acknowledge Him. "A prudent wife," Solomon tells us, "is from the Lord;" and therefore from the Lord this inestimable gift ought to be humbly sought. Is it not highly presumptuous and dishonouring to God to abandon yourselves entirely to your own inclinations and your own judgment in choosing a partner for life? Does it not prove either that you do not believe in His agency as the governor of the world, or that you think that this is a subject in regard to which He does not enjoin you to consult or acknowledge Him? And are not both these notions plainly and palpably inconsistent with the declarations of His word; and must He not therefore be exceedingly displeased with those who do not sincerely implore His special direction? The thoughtless, the irreligious, and the prayerless,

may ridicule this idea, and they may suppose that they need no such direction ; but all who truly "fear the Lord," will reckon it not only their duty, but their high privilege, thus to acknowledge him, and thus to ask from Him what He alone can bestow. Aware that the step they are about to take is one that may be attended with results of the most important nature, which they are utterly unable to foresee, that if this step is rashly and foolishly taken, it may subject them to evils which can neither be avoided nor remedied, they feel the absolute necessity of beseeching God to lead them to a right choice. We have a very interesting example of what I am recommending in the conduct of Abraham's pious steward, Eleazar, when sent by his master to seek for a wife for his son Isaac. The father of the faithful having resolved, in accordance with the will of God, that his son should not connect himself by marriage with any of the idolatrous females of the land, ordered his servant to repair to Mesopotamia, the residence of his kindred, who were worshippers of the true God, and there to seek a suitable partner for his beloved Isaac ; assuring him at the same time that the Lord God of heaven, who took him from his father's house, would send His angel before him and prosper his way. And Eleazar having, in obedience to Abraham's command, set out on his journey, and arrived in the vicinity of the city of Nahor, thus devoutly and solemnly addressed God in reference to the mission with which he was entrusted, "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto

my master Abraham ;” and then he entreats Him to point out to him, in a particular way, the person whom He had destined to be the wife of his master’s son. And though we are not warranted, like Eleazar, to specify any particular way in which our petitions for direction may be answered, we have good grounds to expect, that if we are actuated by the same pious spirit, God will, in His own way, in the course of His providence give us direction. And that which we thus seek by prayer, we may reasonably hope will afterwards afford matter for abundant praise.

2. Do not enter into this connection at too early a period, and before you have any reasonable prospects of being able to provide for those who may be dependent on you, in a way suitable to your station in life. It is very imprudent and dangerous in young persons to allow their minds to dwell on this subject, till they are placed in circumstances in which their wishes can be realized. In the fervour of youth, indeed, what are called the cold calculations of prudence in reference to this matter, are often treated with great contempt ; but experience is daily furnishing proof of the difficulties, and embarrassments, and hardships, in which young persons are often involved by too soon entering into the married state, which they might have avoided by a little delay. Many sadly deceive themselves in regard to this matter, and flatter themselves that nothing more is necessary to render them happy than a union of affectionate hearts ; but when they find themselves obliged to maintain a painful struggle with poverty and want ; when, after the labours and toils of

the day, they can enjoy but little comfort at home, they are thoroughly convinced of their mistake. But this conviction comes too late; they must now pay the penalty of their imprudence. Our experience must be very limited, indeed, if we cannot recount various instances of persons who have had reason bitterly to repent that they so greatly disregarded the dictates of prudence in this matter, and who readily acknowledge that they have thus inflicted very grievous injury on themselves, and on those most nearly connected with them.

3. Beware, in making a choice, of being captivated by mere outward appearance. Beauty of person is a gift of God, and when it is associated with valuable and amiable qualities of mind and heart, it renders its possessor lovely indeed, and worthy of affection. But as it is no uncommon thing for women who are "fair to look upon" to have nothing else to recommend them; and as mere personal charms can only please the eye for a time, you ought seriously to consider whether the person whose countenance and figure render her an object of attraction to you, is also possessed of those more valuable and permanent graces which are calculated to secure your affections, and to fit her to be an intelligent and amiable companion, and to discharge efficiently all the duties of the household over which she is to preside. It is indeed very wrong to enter into such a union without personal attachment, for without personal attachment between the parties there can be no solid basis of happiness; but affection which is kindled only by outward charms, is likely to

be as evanescent as that which has produced it; and therefore a judicious Christian youth will look in a partner for life for those engaging dispositions which will render her truly lovely, even when the outward charms, which he once admired, have faded away. A mere toy may be so exquisitely made, and so elegantly adorned, that the eye for a time gazes on it with pleasure; but a mere toy will not long afford satisfaction. It is outwardly beautiful, but there is nothing within; no internal fountain from which continually flow forth those words and acts of kindness which are essential to real happiness. In the case of Samson, we have an example of the danger of looking only to outward appearance. Having gone down, we are told, to Timnath, he "saw there a woman of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up and told his father and his mother, and said I have seen a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines; now, therefore, get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well." This is the language of a man who was determined to gratify his inclinations, whatever the consequences might be. She pleased him well. He was smitten with her beauty, and without inquiring whether she possessed any other qualification, he resolved to obtain her. He soon found, however, as he afterwards found in another case, that the lap of Delilah was not

a bed of roses ; and that those on whom he had so hastily placed his affections were utterly unworthy of them. "The sons of God," Moses informs us, "saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all whom they chose." They looked only to their beauty, and were not restrained from connecting themselves with them by marriage, even though they were utterly destitute of true religion, and belonged to a most ungodly family.

And this suggests to me the last counsel I intend to offer on this subject, and it is this, "Marry only in the Lord." This is the Scriptural rule, and it can never be violated with impunity. Whatever other qualifications a female may possess, she can be no suitable companion for a young man "who fears the Lord," if she be a stranger to real piety. It is a very dangerous experiment to connect one's self with a person who is not agreed with him on the great subject of religion, in the hope that, through his influence, she may be afterwards brought to a better state of mind ; for in the vast majority of instances such expectations are utterly disappointed. Marriage is not a converting ordinance ; God has not promised to bless it for the purpose of changing the heart, and it is high presumption to expect that such a result will flow from a union which has been formed in opposition to His command, and in accordance with the principle of doing evil that good may come. How much more probable is it, from the acknowledged principles of human nature, and how much more frequently does it happen, that the religious party is

injured by such a connection, rather than the other party benefited. It can in no case be safe to connect ourselves with an irreligious companion ; and if we disregard the divine injunction, we have every reason to fear that, if God does not interpose in a way which we have not the least reason to expect, we shall reap according as we have sown.

The directions of Scripture in regard to this point are very plain and explicit. "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers ; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with darkness ? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel ?" And how many examples are recorded in the Bible of the fatal effects resulting from irreligious marriages. In a passage already quoted, we are informed that the professing people of God connected themselves with the family of wicked Cain, because his daughters were fair, and that these inter-marriages were one grand cause of that enormous wickedness which provoked God to destroy the old world by a flood. "Esau," contrary to the divine command, and to the wishes of his parents, "married Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite, who were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebecca. And Rebecca said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth ; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as those who are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me ?" How sad were the consequences of the marriage of Ahab with the idolatrous and unprincipled Jezebel !

And how deplorable are the results which are still found to flow from such unhallowed unions! When two persons are not agreed in regard to the subject which of all others is the most important, must it not exceedingly diminish the pleasure which they derive from each other's society? And what must be the feelings of the one who has deep impressions of the importance of eternity, when the other is seized with sickness and is drawing nigh to the gates of death; when he is about to be separated for ever from one with whom he has been so closely connected, without having any good hope of the salvation of her soul. It should, then, be a fixed principle with persons of both sexes, never to unite themselves in marriage with those who cannot sympathize with them on the grand subject of religion, and whose influence over their minds in this relation must necessarily be of a very pernicious and dangerous nature. On such unions the blessing of God cannot be expected, because the parties resolve to gratify their own inclinations in direct contradiction to his will. And when any who really fear God do form such connexions, they will be painfully taught by their future experience that the step which they have taken has displeased the Lord.

Let me then entreat you, my young friends, to take the word of God as your guide in *this* matter as well as in every other, and you will find that its directions, proceeding as they do from a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, will conduct you safely and happily through life, and prepare you for the enjoyments of an everlasting state. Think what a delightful consideration

it must be to you at any future period, that you have formed this connection after many earnest prayers that you might know and do the will of God regarding it. You will thus be enabled to look up to Him for that blessing which maketh happy, and addeth no sorrow therewith.

And what a pleasing spectacle it is to behold a youthful couple who thus "marry in the Lord." And who that takes pleasure in human happiness, is not disposed to congratulate them on the prospect before them, and earnestly to pray that it may be fully realized? Their union having received the approving smile of heaven, they may gratefully enjoy all the comforts of which it is productive, and they may be assured that what is truly good for them the Lord will give. And though he should be pleased to visit them with affliction, they shall know where to find the consolation they need. Repairing to that throne of grace at which they are every day accustomed to bow, they make known their requests by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to their Father in heaven; they express their humble and devout acquiescence in His holy will, and resign themselves entirely to His disposal. And while thus engaged, they find a sweet peace arising in their minds, which passeth all understanding, and which supports and strengthens them under all the trials to which they are subjected. And even though their union should soon be dissolved, though it should please God at a very early period to separate them from each other on earth, they shall be cheered with the animating hope that they shall meet

again in the realms of glory to part no more,—that there they shall behold, without an interposing cloud, that God whom they delighted to serve here on earth ; and that their happiness will be unalloyed and unbounded, without interruption and without end.

I am aware, my young friends, that the subject on which I have been addressing you, is one that is but rarely handled in the pulpit ; and I confess, that for various reasons, I have felt considerable hesitation in entering on it. But the matter is so important, and the consequences of disregarding the scriptural injunctions in regard to it are so deplorable, that I have not felt myself warranted altogether to pass it over. I am aware, too, how commonly everything that is said in regard to this subject is converted into a source of levity and mirth, and how very difficult it is to persuade the parties more immediately interested, to think seriously of it at all. But while I am quite ready to admit that, in various respects, it may be a topic of innocent pleasantry, yet, after all, it is a very serious matter, and ought to be seriously considered. And perhaps the counsels which have been suggested may be useful to some, when they begin at a proper time to look out for a partner for life : though, when passion already pleads, and imagination arrays its object in the most engaging charms, they may be considered unworthy of attention. I may just say, before I conclude this part of the subject, that most of the remarks which have been made, are just as applicable to young women as to young men ; and that as many of them do grievously err in this respect, they

ought carefully to beware of rashly forming connections which they may have afterwards, every day of their lives, to deplore.

Sixthly, The next situation in which I propose to contemplate young men, is, when they are exposed to those various temptations which are so often employed to lead them astray. I of course can only notice a very few of these, and I must at present do it very briefly. Now, I have no hesitation in saying that one of the most common of these, and one of the most dangerous, is the temptation to intemperance. O how many promising young men have fallen into this deadly snare, and how have they thus blighted all the pleasing hopes which were once formed of them! Fond of society, they have been persuaded, in order to enjoy it, to repair to those places where drinking is always part of the entertainment provided for them, fully resolving to be very sparing in the use of intoxicating liquors, and not believing it to be possible that they could ever indulge in them to excess, or plunge themselves into the degradation and misery of the drunkard. Gradually, however, they began to acquire a greater relish for them, and to enjoy the temporary excitement and elevation of spirits which they produced. Then they partook of them more freely and more frequently; then they began to long for the arrival of the time, when they could sit down to enjoy them; then they felt a craving want, if they were for a time deprived of them; then they began to consider them essential to their comfort; and then they became the

besotted, wretched, slaves of intemperance. Their substance was wasted away, their health impaired, their character ruined, and their situations taken away from them and given to others. And then they were obliged to descend into a lower grade of society, and then they threw off all restraint and became utterly reckless, and then they were numbered among the ten thousand victims whom intemperance is annually consigning to a premature grave, and to a miserable eternity.

Beware, then, my young friends—I beseech you most earnestly to beware of this insidious vice, which so stealthily insinuates itself into the soul, and binds so many in its chains before they are aware. Do not suppose that, though you are perfectly free from it at present, and regard it with the greatest abhorrence, you are therefore in no danger of yielding to its influence. Alas ! how many who were once highly indignant at the idea that they could ever so degrade themselves, have by insensible degrees become lovers of strong drink, and have ultimately been ruined by its malignant agency. Be not high-minded, but fear. Trust not to the strength of your own resolutions. Earnestly implore God's preserving grace. Resist the beginnings of this most fatal sin ; carefully avoid everything which leads to it ; adopt those means which you find to be most effectual safeguards against it ; cherish a deep conviction of its deceitful nature and ruinous consequences ; and seriously consider those awful examples of its effects, which are daily presented to your view. And let the alarming statement of the inspired volume sink deeply into

your heats, "Drunkards shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It is true that motives, sufficiently powerful to deter you from making the least approaches to intemperance, may be derived from considerations connected with this present life; for this sin is peculiarly and pre-eminently its own punishment, even in this world; yet it is the declarations of God's word in regard to its eternal consequences, that are calculated most powerfully and effectually to impress your hearts.

2. You will meet with temptations to extravagance in dress, furniture, and entertainments, against which you will need to be on your guard. There is a strong tendency in the present day to maintain a style of living which our income cannot afford; and many vie with each other in displaying a degree of outward splendour, by which they are soon involved in difficulties and embarrassments. Let me caution you against imitating such an example. Do not employ the property of others in adorning your persons or your houses, or in providing entertainments for your friends; for you may not be so successful in business as to be able at the proper time to restore it. Content yourselves with those accommodations which your own resources enable you to obtain, and add to them as your circumstances will permit. Remember, that, by imprudence in this respect, you will bring great reproach upon the religion which you profess; and that you will give its enemies an opportunity of saying, that it does very little indeed for those who squander away, on their own gratification, that which does not belong to them. What a melancholy spectacle it is to see young persons,

who are just entering upon life, expending large sums, which their circumstances do not entitle them to employ, upon mere outward embellishment, and obliged in a short time to give up those expensive articles, which they ought never to have purchased. How much wiser, and how much more in accordance with the religion of Christ, never to use for your own convenience or indulgence, that which may render you unable to give every man his own. Beware, then, of commencing a rivalry with others, which you are unable to maintain. Let it be your firm resolution, in dependence on the grace of God, to render to all men their due, and never, by any foolish and extravagant expenditure, to incapacitate yourselves for obeying the divine injunction, "Owe no man anything."

3. You are exposed to temptations to join in sinful amusements. It is unnecessary to determine precisely what these are ; you must endeavour, by the application of scriptural rules, to ascertain them for yourselves. With regard to some things of this nature, there may be a diversity of opinion,—some maintaining that they are quite harmless, while others assert that they are injurious. It is quite true that body and mind, when fatigued and overstrained by exertion, need relaxation ; and that in these circumstances, it is perfectly allowable to betake ourselves to such recreations as tend to give us relief, and to prepare us for the more vigorous discharge of the duties of our station. There are some things, which irreligious and worldly men call amusements, which are so plainly opposed to the requirements of the Gospel

of Christ, and so destructive of the spirit which it aims to produce, that no one can entertain any doubt with regard to them, who pays any suitable attention to the declarations and precepts of God's word. With regard to other things which are not so clearly and decidedly wrong, you should inquire, Do they really tend to refresh me in mind and body, and to prepare me for the more cheerful and active discharge of the duties of life? Are they of such a nature, that they do not subject me to unwarrantable expense, nor require me to be absent from home at unseasonable hours? If so, then you may lawfully and safely enjoy them. But if you find that, instead of invigorating, they render you more languid and indolent than before; if they indispose you for the worship and service of God; if they can be enjoyed only at very late hours, which are inconsistent with all regular family arrangements; if they bring you into too close contact with the acknowledged lovers of pleasures; if they tend to unsettle your minds, and to give them a dislike for your ordinary employments; if they subject you to a degree of expense which you cannot well afford, or which is beyond their real value; if, in a word, instead of being recreations, by which your exhausted powers are restored to their proper tone, they have a contrary effect, you ought to reckon them neither lawful nor safe. If you really fear the Lord—if you really delight in the exercises of His worship—you will soon discover what those things are which indispose and unfit you for maintaining communion with God; and you will feel yourselves bound to

renounce all those kinds of amusement which deaden your devotional feelings, and which are therefore injurious to your spiritual welfare. There are, however, various things to which the worldly and the irreligious have recourse for amusement, about the pernicious and dangerous nature of which you ought not to have a moment's hesitation, and which therefore you ought to shun as you would the pestilence. These entertainments you cannot ask God to bless ; and when you are about to enjoy them, you cannot pray, "Lead us not into temptation ;" for you must be conscious that you are wilfully entering into it, and that it would be very daring presumption to ask Him to preserve you from a danger to which you are determined to expose yourselves.

4 There are manifold temptations to the indulgence of fleshly lusts, against which you need to be continually on your guard. The sin of licentiousness, to the disgrace of our age and country be it said, is awfully common ; and its degraded, diseased, bloated, and loathsome victims are alarmingly numerous. And is this to be wondered at, when we consider how the incentives to it are multiplied on every hand, and how many look upon it as scarcely a sin at all, if it can only be concealed ? When persons are accustomed to inflame their passions with strong drink ; when they listen to impure songs ; when they associate with persons of unchaste conversation ; when they go to the theatre ; when they hear and see so much that is calculated to excite the flame of lust ; when they are accustomed to read books which defile and pollute

their imaginations; what is to be expected but that they shall be hurried on to the commission of this sin, and that, having yielded once to temptation, they will much more easily yield to it again? And is it true, that this sin is so solemnly condemned by God, in the Seventh Commandment, and in various other parts of His word? Is it true, that notwithstanding the divine prohibitions, it prevails to a very great extent? Is it true, that it is making the most frightful havoc upon the consciences, the characters, the health, and the property, of many in our land? and shall the ministers of the gospel be silent in regard to it? shall they refrain from lifting up their warning voice? Shall the most shameful and disgusting advertisements, in reference to this subject, be daily inserted in our newspapers? and shall God's servants be deterred from exposing and denouncing the iniquity thus continually and most offensively obtruded on us? Shall Satan and his agents be allowed, without restraint, to carry on their work of death, and ruin multitudes in soul and body? and shall we be prevented, because the subject is of a delicate nature, from endeavouring to counteract their vile and malignant design? Is it true that the curse of God very remarkably rests upon impure sinners, entering into their very bones, converting their bodies into masses of corruption, withering the faculties of their souls and the affections of their hearts, and bringing them to an untimely grave? and shall we not warn the young against everything which has a tendency to lead them to the commission of a sin, of which God thus awfully proclaims His

abhorrence, and which is attended with consequences so tremendously appalling ?

Let me entreat you, then, my young friends, carefully to avoid everything which excites unhallowed desires. Beware of giving loose reins to your imagination. Never read any of those publications, however attractive they may be in some respects, which leave any stain of pollution on your minds. Shun, with the greatest care, the company of those who shew the rottenness of their hearts by the filthiness of their conversation. Think much of the immaculate purity and holiness of God, into whose presence nothing that defileth can ever enter. Remember that in His sight the impure desire is sin, the impure look is sin, the impure word is sin, as well as the impure action. Endeavour constantly to realise His presence, and shrink with aversion from everything by which He is displeased and dishonoured. Ponder the admonition of Solomon, addressed to the young, in regard to this subject. "Hearken unto me now, therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth. Let not thine heart decline to her ways,"—the ways of the harlot of whom he had been speaking—"Go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, leading down to the chambers of death."

Lastly, you will meet with temptations even to infidelity. It is most melancholy to think, that in all our large towns there are not a few who profess to disbelieve the Scriptures of truth, and who are very

zealous in their efforts to undermine the faith of others, and to persuade them to embrace the dark cheerless system which they have adopted. And though their objections and their cavils against the Holy Scriptures have been a thousand times completely refuted and exposed, they continually bring them forward with as much confidence as if they had never been answered. It is necessary, therefore, in order that you may be prepared to repel their assaults, that you make yourselves acquainted with some of the best works on the evidences of Christianity. But the best of all preservatives against the attacks of infidelity, is a heartfelt experience of the vital power of the truths of the gospel. The man who is conscious that he has passed from darkness into marvellous light, that all old things have passed away; and all things become new, and that his belief of God's word is productive of the most salutary effects upon his heart and conduct, is not likely to be deceived by the reasonings of those who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. He must be a cunning sophister, it has been remarked, who can succeed in convincing another, that the sun does not shine, while he sees its light and feels its heat. Contrast the effects produced by a cordial belief of the gospel, with those which result from a rejection of God's word. Contemplate, for example, the apostle Paul, after his conversion to the faith of Christ. How noble the dispositions which he displayed—how glorious and beneficent the career which he ran! Behold him resigning honour, wealth, and power, and every-

thing which the men of the world most eagerly seek after, and devoting himself entirely to the service of Him to whom he felt himself to be infinitely indebted ; inspired with an inextinguishable desire of promoting the purity, the comfort, and the happiness of his fellow-men, and for this purpose braving all dangers, encountering all obstacles, submitting to all hardships, enduring all sufferings, travelling from place to place to deliver the unspeakably important message with which he was entrusted ; rescuing multitudes from the lowest depths of degradation, vice, and misery, and communicating to them the knowledge of that truth, which was at once the means of purifying their polluted souls, and raising them to a state of happiness and dignity, which they never knew before ; and continuing thus to act during his whole life, not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing, loving his enemies, doing good to them that hated him, and praying for those who despitefully used and persecuted him ; and at length willingly, nay joyfully, sealing his testimony with his blood : and when you have surveyed all the excellencies with which he was adorned, ask yourselves, was there ever such a character as this formed in the schools of infidel philosophers, orators, poets, or statesmen ? Compare him with the most renowned of those who have abjured the Christian faith, and say, who possessed the most valuable qualities of mind and heart, who was the greatest benefactor to his species ? Let us take Bolingbroke, or Hume, or Rousseau, or Voltaire, or Paine, or any of the same class ; let us mark the effect

of their principles upon their temper and conduct ; let us notice their towering pride, their unmixed selfishness, their contemptible vanity, their base treachery, their abominable licentiousness ; in a word, let us observe how wickedly they lived, and how miserably they died ; and let us calmly and seriously consider if the happiness of mankind would be most promoted by persons of this description, or by those who resemble the great apostle of the Gentiles. In which class would we repose most confidence in the ordinary affairs of life ? To which would we first apply for sympathy, consolation, and relief, under the pressure of affliction ? With which of them would we wish to be associated in death, and to have our portion through eternity ? He must be a most degraded, reckless, daring infidel indeed, who would declare that he admired the character of the lewd and brutal monster Paine, more than that of the eminently benevolent and holy Paul, and that he would rather dwell in the same place for ever with this bold champion of infidelity, than with the distinguished apostle of the Lord Jesus. Such a person, if such a person there be, has sunk to the lowest depths of depravity ; his understanding is enveloped in the thickest darkness ; his heart is steeped in the vilest impurity. In the hands of such a man your reputation, your property, and your life, are not safe one moment longer than he finds it convenient, safe, and profitable to deprive you of them ; and if his principles were universally adopted, and his character universally to prevail, the fabric of society must be dissolved, and tumble into ruins, and the earth become the very

throne of Satan, the very porch of hell. But though infidelity be at the present time boldly rearing its head, and diligently propagating its destructive tenets, let us rejoice in the thought that the truth as it is in Jesus, the truth preached by the apostle Paul, is mighty through God to overthrow it ; and that the time is rapidly approaching, when its hateful nature shall be so clearly seen by all mankind, that it will be the object of universal loathing and abhorrence, and be compelled to hide itself in the bottomless pit, the place whence it sprung ; while the religion of Jesus, having triumphed over every system of error, shall appear in all its loveliness and beauty, and achieving conquest after conquest over the ignorance and depravity of mankind, shall sway her benign and peaceful sceptre over a regenerated, redeemed, and happy world.

Seventhly, Let us now contemplate the young man who fears the Lord, while enjoying worldly prosperity. It may please God to favour you for a time with uninterrupted health of body, with the greatest vigour and cheerfulness of mind, with the most gratifying success in business, with a large measure of kindness from friends, and with the good opinion of your fellow-men. You may be blessed with an amiable and beloved partner, whose society imparts a double relish to all your other comforts ; and, in a word, you may be surrounded with everything of an earthly nature which men most highly value, and which they think necessary to render them happy in this present life. Or,

though your sky is not always unclouded and serene, though events do sometimes occur which greatly mar your enjoyment, yet on the whole you have good reason to say that a cup full of blessings, though not altogether unmixed, has been put into your hands. Now, in the words of Solomon, I would exhort you, "in the day of prosperity to be joyful," and to express your joy in fervent gratitude and thankfulness to that God "who has given you all things so richly to enjoy." These things are all good in themselves, and fitted to promote the happiness of those who possess them, if inspired with a devout and pious spirit towards their heavenly benefactor; they become the occasion of evil, only through the natural corruption and depravity of the heart, which perverts and abuses every gift which God bestows. It is perfectly lawful for you to enjoy the good things which you have honourably acquired; and you will then enjoy them in the highest degree, when you remember from whom you have received them, when you acknowledge how unworthy you are of the least of them, and when you render to God the willing, cheerful tribute of gratitude and praise. What a beautiful example of that devout and thankful spirit which you should cultivate in prosperity, is presented to you in the case of David, on the occasion in which Nathan, by the command of God, reminded him that He had taken him from the sheep cot, from following the sheep, to be ruler over His people, over Israel; that He had been with him whithersoever he had gone, and cut off all his enemies, and made him a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are upon the

earth ; and that after his days were fulfilled upon the earth, he would set up his seed after him, and establish his kingdom. "Then," we are told, "went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and said, Who am I, O Lord God ? and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto ? And this was yet a small thing in Thy sight, O Lord God ; but thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God ? And what can David say more unto Thee, for Thou, Lord God, knowest Thy servant ?" And if you have been raised from a very humble station to a state of comparative abundance, if God has been pleased to cause the sun of temporal prosperity to shine on you, surely it becomes you, while so highly favoured with his gifts, gratefully to acknowledge the Giver.

But, in the second place, I remind you, that in the day of prosperity you are peculiarly bound to give practical proofs of the gratitude which you feel to Him who has done so great things for you. You have now very precious opportunities of doing much for promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of your fellow-men. Devote, therefore, a suitable proportion of your substance to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, and to the relief of the poor and the needy. Let it be your delight liberally to communicate of what has been so liberally conferred on you. Account it your high privilege that you are furnished with the means of gratifying your benevolent feelings, and of alleviating and removing the temporal and spiritual evils to which your fellow-men are sub-

jected. Let the pleasure you derive from the good things you possess, be enhanced and purified by sharing them with those who are not so highly favoured—"It is more blessed to give," says our Lord, "than to receive." Seek to enjoy a large measure of that blessedness. Let your hearts be expanded with the benevolence which the gospel inspires; and let your chief luxury be the luxury of doing good. Do not give grudgingly, or of necessity; but "be ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Remember, that if it had so pleased God, you might have been placed in very different circumstances, needing the aid which you are now able to impart; you might have been struggling with all the hardships of poverty and disease; you might have been sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death. Let, then, the blessing of those that are ready to perish come upon you, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy. Do not covetously hoard up that which you ought usefully to employ. Remember that the Lord Jesus has a cause upon earth, in which he takes the deepest interest; that he has poor members on earth, whom he regards with the strongest affection; and that he requires all his followers, according to their means and opportunities, to advance the former, and to show kindness to the latter. Let it, then, be your constant and noble aim, like your Divine Master, to be doing good—to be doing good cheerfully—and to be doing good according as God hath prospered you. And I may again refer you to the spirit and conduct of David, as highly worthy of imitation. While residing in a splendid

palace, furnished with everything which his heart could desire, the reflection occurred to him, that while he dwelt in a house of cedar, the ark of God dwelt within curtains ; and the resolution at the same time arose in his mind, that he would build Him a magnificent temple, in which His worship should be maintained. And though, for wise reasons, God did not permit him to accomplish this design, yet he laid up immense treasures of gold and silver, and precious stones, to be employed by his son Solomon, in the erection of this most glorious edifice ; and out of his own proper good he gave three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver. And after he had contributed these princely donations, and after his subjects had in like manner given largely of their substance to this great object, he expressed the grateful feelings of his heart in a song of praise to the Lord God of Israel.

3. I exhort you to beware of the snares and dangers to which a state of worldly prosperity exposes you. Though the abundance of temporal blessings, which God sometimes showers down upon us, increases our obligations to love and serve him, yet it is but rarely, indeed, that this effect is found to result from it. On the contrary, it for the most part renders us ungrateful, proud, and overbearing; disposes us to self-indulgence, and to conformity to the habits and practices of the world; damps the ardour of our zeal for the advancement of religion ; and produces coldness and formality in our devotional exercises. How many and how deplorable the examples, which we continually witness,

of the pernicious effects of worldly prosperity upon persons who once seemed to have chosen the good part, which would not be taken from them. For a time, perhaps, they maintained their integrity, and appeared grateful to God for the benefits which he was bestowing on them ; but gradually their interest in spiritual things began to decline, and they manifested a greater relish for worldly enjoyments. Then they began to entertain company much more frequently, and to mingle with the genteeler classes of society. Their former religious habits then began to be irksome ; and the wish arose in their hearts that they could renounce them, in order that they might enjoy, with less restraint, the pleasures of the world. Then, private and family prayer being deferred to a late hour, was hurried over, and then, perhaps, neglected altogether. Their attendance in the house of God then became less regular ; and they easily satisfied themselves with any plausible excuse for their occasional absence. The faithful, searching preaching of the gospel then excited their dislike and aversion ; they could not bear to be plainly dealt with, and to have the treachery and deceitfulness of their hearts unfolded, and the danger of conformity to this present evil world exposed. And if any faithful Christian friend, who beheld with concern and sorrow the mournful change which had taken place in their spirit and conduct, seriously and affectionately addressed them on this subject, they were highly offended ; they denounced him as meddling and presumptuous, and carefully in future shunned his society. They would not brook any interference with the mode of life which

they had resolved to follow ; and in order to shew their independence, plunged still more deeply into the amusements and gaieties of the world. And even when worldly prosperity does not lead us so far astray, yet it is but seldom, indeed, that it does not exert a pernicious influence upon the mind ; especially, if we are placed in it not by degrees, but suddenly. If it does not corrupt our principles, it diminishes their power ; if it does not destroy our devotional feelings, it greatly impairs them ; if it does not extinguish our zeal for the progress of vital piety, it makes it far less fervent. And hence it is a very uncommon thing to see a person who is borne along on the tide of worldly prosperity, who is distinguished for spirituality of mind, and the other graces of the Christian character. How strikingly are the evils which usually accompany worldly prosperity described by Moses, in the numerous exhortations and warnings to the Israelities, when about to take possession of their promised inheritance.

Though, therefore, my young friends, a prosperous state may appear to you most desirable, yet be assured that it is attended with many dangers ; and that it much more frequently injures than improves the Christian character of those who enjoy it. If, therefore, you should be placed in such a situation, you have peculiar need to watch and pray. You are in circumstances which have proved exceedingly injurious to the spiritual welfare of many, and which have impelled some to abandon a religious profession altogether ; and if you are not on your guard, and

earnestly supplicate the grace of God, it will produce the same sad effects upon you. Your religious ardour will abate ; your love will wax cold ; you will become fond of worldly society and luxurious indulgence ; you will dislike and avoid the company of those who fear God, and listen to those only who flatter and caress you. You will lose your relish for devout communion with God ; you will be offended by the faithful application of the truth to your conscience ; you will become earthly and carnal in your tastes and habits ; and if you are not awakened from the fatal lethargy by the voice of God, and the dispensations of His providence, you will sleep the sleep of death.

Eighthly, Let us now contemplate the religious young man, when he meets with discouragements and trials—when he is subjected to personal and relative afflictions. In a world which is emphatically termed a vale of tears, you cannot expect to be always exempted from mental or bodily suffering. The sun of prosperity will not always shine on you ; days of darkness, and grief, and pain, will come. Your health, which is now a source of so much enjoyment, may fail, and you may be laid on a bed of sickness or languishing ; your worldly business, in which you have hitherto been very successful, may begin to fail ; your friends, who have hitherto been kind and obliging, may become cold and distant ; your dearest relations, in whose society you have felt yourselves so happy, may be removed by death ; your prospects in life, which have hitherto been so

pleasing, may be clouded ; and distressing fears about the future may agitate your hearts, and give a sorrowful expression to your countenances. And such things as these you ought to look for in this lower world ; and when they come upon you, you ought not to wonder, as if some strange thing had befallen you. "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." And even those who are most distinguished for their piety towards God, and their devotedness to His service, are often most distinguished for the greatness of their trials. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." If, therefore, you are His children, you may expect to meet with that chastisement whereof all are partakers. He knows that it is good for you to be afflicted ; and though you know not now the reasons why He thus deals with you, you shall know them hereafter.

Let me, then, exhort you, first, to study to maintain a becoming frame of mind under the disappointments, losses, bereavements, and sufferings, with which He may be pleased to visit you. Remember that it is your Father in heaven who thus corrects you—a Father, who is infinitely wise, and knows perfectly what those dispensations are which are most suitable to your peculiar circumstances—a Father, who is infinitely kind, and who will not inflict a single pang which He does not know to be absolutely needful. You may perhaps have begun to idolize your earthly comforts, and to permit them to interfere with the supreme affection which you owe to Him ; and He thinks it necessary to show you how great are your

guilt and folly, in thus estranging your hearts from Him. Or, He may foresee that you are in great danger of thus forsaking Him, the fountain of living water, and of hewing out for yourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water ; and He may judge it necessary, as a preventative, to visit you with the rod. Or, it may be His design to quicken you in the way to heaven, and to make you desirous to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better ; and, therefore, He removes all those objects which attach you too much to earth, and He subjects you to those trials which tend to elevate your affections more and more to that world, where there is no more pain, neither grief nor sorrow, and where the former things are passed away. O ! then, let the sincere language of your hearts be, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath now taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord."

2. Let it be your earnest desire and prayer, that you may derive from your afflictions those precious fruits which they are intended to yield to God's children, who are exercised thereby. It is the design of your heavenly Father, that you thus become practically convinced of the vanity of the world, and of the infinite value of the gospel of Christ, which can afford you strong consolation in the most painful circumstances in which you can be placed ; that your faith may be strengthened ; and that your humility and spirituality of mind may be increased. It is a beautiful spectacle to see a young Christian coming out of the furnace of affliction, as gold seven times

purified ; reflecting more brightly than ever his Saviour's lovely image, and prepared to run with greater energy than ever the race that is set before him. The utter emptiness of all earthly objects he has now seen in the clearest light ; the grandeur of eternity has burst upon him with overpowering splendour. The beauty of holiness has now been exhibited to him in the most captivating form, and it is his ardent desire that with this invaluable ornament his soul may be adorned. How strikingly were the beneficial effects of affliction exemplified in the case of David—when he was persecuted by Saul, and driven into the wilderness—when he was obliged to flee from one hiding place to another, in order to save his life—when he was continually exposed to the greatest dangers and privations. O ! how was his devotional spirit kindled, and his trust in God confirmed—and how thoroughly was he thus prepared for the zealous discharge of the duties of the high office with which he was afterwards invested. Had not David been so afflicted in the wilderness, he would not have been so humble and so useful on the throne.

Be not, then, discouraged, my young friends ; do not yield to despondency in the day of adversity—God is leading you by the same path by which he has already conducted many sons into glory. And there are multitudes now before the throne, who have come out of great tribulation, who gratefully acknowledge that the sufferings which they endured on earth, are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is now revealed in them ; and that their light affliction, which

was but for a moment, has worked out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And you, also, in due time, shall be admitted among that glorious company, clothed in white robes, and with palms in your hands ; and though now you may often be in heaviness through manifold temptations, yet the Lord will at length deliver you out of them all, and you will exultingly exclaim—He hath done all things well, my severest trials were all needful, and they have all worked together for my everlasting good.

Ninthly, I propose now to contemplate the young in a state of religious declension. The persons whom I have in view, were once deeply impressed by divine truth—they once with the greatest fervour poured out their hearts in prayer before God, and suffered nothing to interfere with the seasons they appropriated to devout meditation, and the reading of the Scriptures ; they came up regularly to the house of God, with the most earnest desire to enjoy his presence, and his blessing there ; they manifested a heartfelt concern for the salvation of their perishing fellow-men, and zealously employed all those means which God has promised to render effectual for their conversion ; they looked with pity on those who satisfied themselves with a cold formal profession of religion, while they evidently conformed to the maxims and practices of the world ; they often looked forward with the intensest interest to that eternal state, to which they were continually hastening, and felt that their grand concern on earth was to secure the favour of God, and to be

prepared for the happiness of heaven ; but now their interest in divine things has greatly diminished ; their delight and earnestness in prayer and other religious exercises, have greatly abated ; they do not listen to divine truth with the eager attention which they once manifested ; they shorten the time which they once devoted to communion with God, and derive but little enjoyment from the time they still allot to this purpose ; they become more engrossed with worldly employments and pursuits ; they begin to join in amusements from which they formerly abstained, because they found them injurious to their spiritual welfare ; they devise a variety of excuses for neglecting those duties which they once cheerfully discharged ; they are conscious of a secret disinclination to retirement and self-examination in the sight of God ; and though they still maintain a profession of religion, they have, to a great extent, left their first love, and have sunk into a state of Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference.

This is a very deplorable, a very dangerous, though it is to be feared by no means an uncommon condition. Is there one of you, my young friends, to whom it may be justly said, "Thou art the man ;" any one of you who is conscious that he has sadly declined in personal religion, that while he still retains the form, he possesses little, if any, of the power of godliness ? If there be, permit me to remind you,

i. That you ought to be greatly alarmed on account of this melancholy change, which has taken place in you. You have begun a downward progress ; and if

you are not arrested in this dangerous course, you know not to what a depth of degradation, sin, and misery, you may fall. The Holy Spirit, provoked and grieved by your departure from God, may give you up to walk in the way of your own hearts ; and then your religious impressions will gradually wear away, and the love of sin will increase in a corresponding degree. You will yield to one temptation after another ; your heart will become hardened, and your conscience seared ; and God may address to you these awful words, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." Much cause, therefore, have you to tremble, if you are thus backsliding from God, lest you should be abandoned to perpetual backsliding, and never be recovered.

2. Endeavour to ascertain what are the causes, which have produced in you this state of religious declension. You are not what you once were ; you have undergone a very mournful change. Why is it thus with you ? Is God less worthy of your esteem and affection now than formerly ? Has the Lord Jesus become less glorious and lovely ? Have your souls become less precious ? Has eternity become less important ? Have you more certainty of the continuance of your life now than formerly ? Are your obligations to your God and Saviour not so great now as they once were ? Have you discovered that He is not able to communicate to you so much enjoyment as you once expected to derive from Him ; and are you prepared to testify that it is on these accounts that your delight in the exercises of His worship has

abated, and that your zeal for the promotion of His glory has so greatly diminished? O! are you not startled at the very idea of thus practically bearing false witness against God and His service, against Christ and His gospel, against the Holy Spirit and His work upon the soul? Must you not acknowledge that the change has taken place in you, and not in the spiritual objects with which you were once conversant? Have you not relaxed your vigilance in guarding against the temptations to which you were exposed? Have you not neglected or hurried over devout meditation? Have you not yielded to langour and listlessness in prayer? Have you not become indolent in duty? Have you not been too much occupied with the things of the world? Have you not been complying with the solicitations of the flesh? Have you not been spending too much of your time in gay and irreligious society? Have you not been indulging some secret sin, or grasping at something which you cannot lawfully or safely possess? Is it not one or other of these things, or the combined operation of several of them, that has been preying like a worm at the root of your profession, and withering and blighting those prospects of fruitfulness in the garden of the Lord which you once exhibited? Is it not on these accounts, that "your soul," to use the words of a pious writer, "has lost ground, that the divine life has declined, that the fruit of the spirit has withered, that the heart has lost its softness, the conscience its tenderness, the mind its lowness, the throne of grace its sweetness, the cross of Jesus its at-

traction? O! how sad and melancholy the change that has passed over you! And have you not the consciousness of it in your own soul? Where is the blessedness ye spake of? Where is the sunlight of a reconciled Father? Where are the rich moments spent before the cross, the hallowed seasons of communion in the closet, shut in with God? Where is the voice of the turtle-dove, the singing of birds, the green pastures where thou didst feed, the still waters on whose banks thou didst repose? Is it all gone? Is it all winter with thy soul? Ah! yes; thy soul is made to feel that it is an evil and a bitter thing to depart from the living God." When you have discovered the cause or causes of your spiritual declension, I exhort you,

3. To acknowledge them before God, to humble yourselves on account of them, and to return immediately to Him from whom you have so wickedly departed. You have the greatest cause to blush and be confounded in His presence; and it becomes you to make a full, an ingenuous, and an unreserved confession of the guilt which you have contracted. This is the direction which God himself gives to all who are in the same circumstances as you: "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God." "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." The God whom you have offended is full of

compassion, and will not deal with you according to your sins, nor reward you according to your iniquities ; but on your return to Him, will heal your backslidings, and love you freely. " Only," says He, " acknowledge thine iniquity." O how should these words melt your hearts, and dispose you to say, O blessed God, I have gone astray like a lost sheep ; I have been seeking in the creature that which is to be found only in the Creator. I have been wandering far from Thee, and have been vainly pursuing empty vanities as substantial good. And dost Thou still say, Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings ? And shall I not reply, Behold I come to Thee, for Thou art the Lord my God. Thus David confessed his transgressions unto the Lord, and the Lord forgave the iniquity of his sin, and restored to him the joys of his salvation. Thus Ephraim bemoaned himself, saying, " Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke ; turn Thou me, and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God." And God heard his voice, and said, " Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ; for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still ; therefore, my bowels are troubled for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." O then, be encouraged to prostrate yourselves with the deepest self-abasement, at the throne of grace ; acknowledge your sins with godly sorrow ; plead God's gracious invitations ; plead the infinite value of the blood of Christ ; plead the promise of the Spirit to create in you a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within you, and He will again

make you to hear joy and gladness, and lift upon you the light of His reconciled countenance.

Once more, let me remind you of the absolute necessity of renouncing and mortifying all those things by which your spiritual health has been impaired, and your eternal welfare endangered. If it be your right hand that has offended you, you must cut it off ; if it be your right eye, it must be plucked out ; if it be a fascinating companion, his society must be abandoned ; if it be some ambitious project, it must be laid aside ; if it be some darling passion, it must be mortified ; if it be some captivating amusement, it must be relinquished. No confessions of sin, no resolutions of amendment, will be of any avail, if there be any secret or open sin to which you still cleave, and in which you still indulge.

And now, my young friends, let me entreat you to give earnest attention to the considerations which have been suggested to you, and to beware of continuing in a lukewarm and declining state. You have been drawing back, and have you not great reason to fear, lest you should be found among those who draw back unto perdition, and who have thus shown that their hearts were never right with God ? Ah, how deplorable their condition ! They are sliding back with a perpetual backsliding, and refusing to return. They are stifling the voice of conscience, and resisting the Holy Spirit, and hardening their hearts. They become more and more enslaved to sin ; the gloom of despair begins to settle upon their souls ; they endeavour to avoid, if possible, all reflection upon the future ; and at length

the time of God's forbearance comes to an end ; the hour of death arrives ; their souls are required of them ; and in the presence of their righteous Judge they are compelled to appear, and the sentence is pronounced on them, which determines their final doom.

Tenthly, Let us now contemplate the young going on in their Christian course rejoicing, and actively engaged in doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men. How refreshing and delightful to behold the young entering upon that bright career of devotedness to God, and of usefulness to mankind, by which they will be conducted to glory, honour, and immortality ! What a source of comfort and happiness they prove to their parents and relations ! what a support and ornament to the church of which they are members ! and what a blessing to the community to which they belong ! Having proposed to themselves the noblest object to which the powers of the human mind can be directed, they pursue it with all their characteristic ardour and activity ; and while thus honourably and profitably employed, they enjoy a degree of satisfaction and peace in their own minds, which they can never derive from the pleasures and amusements of this present evil world. They are fulfilling the course which their heavenly Father has marked out to them ; they are finishing the work which He has given them to do. It is their high and holy aim to extend the empire of truth, and righteousness, and peace, and love ; to make known to others that precious gospel by which alone they can be raised from the degradation and misery of

sin ; to imitate the example of their beloved Lord, whose heart glowed with the most benevolent tenderness, and who went about doing good ; to relieve the wants of the poor and the indigent ; to visit the forsaken and the helpless, to assist the weak, to encourage the desponding, to comfort the mourner, and, in a word, to promote the welfare of all around them. And the motive by which they are animated to perform all these services, is not the desire of human applause, nor the expectation of thereby advancing their own worldly interests, but love to their God and Saviour, who has made them the blessed partakers of His great salvation.

As illustrations of the character I have been endeavouring to describe, I may refer you to such examples as the following :—

Samuel, while yet a child, was called to be a prophet of the Lord, and pre-eminently qualified for the high office with which he was invested. " As he grew on," we are told, " he grew in favour with the Lord, and with men." He discharged the duties of governor and judge of the Israelites with a faithfulness, an impartiality, a disinterestedness, and a zeal, which commanded universal admiration, and which proved in the highest degree beneficial to those over whom he presided. And after a life entirely and unweariedly devoted to the service of God, and of his people, he descended into the grave amidst the tears and lamentations of his countrymen ; while his sons, who walked not in his ways, were lightly esteemed ; and the sons of Eli, who abandoned themselves to profligacy and

vice, were cut off in the flower of their age by the righteous judgment of God, and their names go down, branded with infamy, from generation to generation.

Josiah, too, began to seek the Lord while he was yet young ; and what ardent zeal did he manifest for the honour of God, and what a blessing to his subjects was the administration of their youthful sovereign ! The idolatrous practices that prevailed at the beginning of his reign, he utterly abolished ; the worship of God, which had been neglected, he restored ; the temple, which had begun to fall, he repaired ; the law of Moses, which was almost lost, he caused to be read in the ears of all Israel ; those who had forsaken the Lord, and served other gods, he persuaded to return to the Lord, and to enter into a covenant, that they would walk after the Lord, and keep His commandments and His statutes ; the passover, which had been for many years neglected, he observed with extraordinary solemnity. Such was the influence he thus acquired over his subjects, that all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers ; and when in the full vigour of life he fell on the field of battle, all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him, as a sovereign of surpassing goodness.

John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, and he proved a burning and a shining light to his countrymen, pointing out to them clearly the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, beseeching them to repent of all their sins, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Jerusalem, we are told, and all Judea, and the

region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. With the greatest impartiality and intrepidity he fulfilled his ministry, not hesitating to denounce Scribes and Pharisees as a generation of vipers, and to reprove even a king who was living in flagrant violation of the divine laws. Of those who were born of women, a greater than John the Baptist had not hitherto appeared ; his course, though short, was most brilliant and glorious, and his memory was held in the profoundest veneration.

Saul of Tarsus was a young man when he was converted to the faith of Christ ; and after that most wonderful revolution in his views and feelings and character, what a sublime career did he run ! Inflamed with the intensest love to the Lord Jesus, who had appeared to him in the way to Damascus, and snatched him as a brand from the burning, and conferred on him the most precious blessings, he devoted himself to His service with a degree of ardour, self-denial, zeal, and energy, altogether unparalleled ; travelling about from country to country, preaching with the utmost earnestness the faith which once he destroyed, turning many from the darkness of heathenism to the glorious light of the gospel, rescuing them from the most abject degradation and misery, and conferring on them the liberty and the privileges of the children of God. In almost every city and province which he visited, his ministry was remarkably blessed ; and he left behind him great numbers who were hitherto blinded, impure, and wretched idolaters,

but who, by his instrumentality, were enlightened, converted, and saved. How different his course would have been, had he continued the proud self-righteous Pharisee, who verily thought with himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. His memory perhaps might have been preserved, as one that had breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the church, and subjected her to the severest persecutions ; but there would have been none to arise and call him blessed, none to express their ardent gratitude to him as the messenger of heaven to communicate peace, and purity, and love, and joy to their souls. But called to be an apostle of Christ, what unspeakable benefits has he been the means of conferring upon the human race ; and with what unbounded admiration and esteem has his character been regarded throughout all generations ! Well might he say at the end of life, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge will give me in that day."

In modern times, too, we find many examples of persons animated by the same spirit, following the same benevolent course, and enjoying the same felicity. I may refer to that ardent, devoted, and heavenly-minded missionary, Henry Martyn. After he became the subject of God's converting grace, what a flame of love to God and love to man was kindled in his soul ! how ready was he to renounce honour, ease, friends, country, all he held dear on earth, and to spend his

days among idolaters in a foreign clime, to endure hardships and privations of every kind, and to labour with unwearyed diligence for the salvation of his perish-ing fellow-men! At home, he might have obtained the highest academic honours, and one of the richest benefices of a wealthy establishment; but he chose rather to repair to the shores of India, that he might assist in causing its myriads of depraved and degraded inhabitants to hear in their own language the won-derful works of God. And who can read his history without admiring the exceeding grace of God in him, and without being convinced that the most glorious and blessed career on which mortals can enter, is that of entire devotedness to the service of God, to what-ever labours, and sufferings, and self-denial, it may expose him?

The missionary, John Williams, affords another very striking illustration of the character of which we have been speaking. He, too, amidst the thoughtlessness, and levity, and folly of youth, was arrested by sovereign and omnipotent grace, and became a new creature in Christ Jesus. And then he commenced a career of usefulness, which increased in splendour as he advanced in life, and which has elevated him almost to the dignity of an apostle to many of the lovely islands which adorn the Pacific ocean. To these far distant regions he eagerly repaired, and there he laboured with all his heart, and all his soul, to promote the temporal and eternal welfare of these benighted and miserable islanders. With marvellous and heaven-taught ingenuity, he with his own hands constructed

a vessel, for the purpose of visiting the various islands which are scattered over the immense Pacific ; and in this little bark, which he appropriately called "the messenger of peace," he sailed on a voyage of mercy, conveying with him the glad tidings of salvation ; and heaven smiled on his enterprise of love ; and the light of divine truth entered into many a darkened mind ; and the power of divine grace softened, and subdued, and purified many a hard and polluted heart ; and the idols which they ignorantly worshipped, they cast to the moles and to the bats ; and they became the devout worshippers of Jehovah, and speedily manifested in their spirit and conduct the benign influence of the religion which they had embraced. And oh ! how pure, how elevated must have been the joy with which the bosom of Williams was inspired, as he proceeded from island to island, and witnessed the triumphs of the gospel over the kingdom of the wicked one, and listened to the expressions of heartfelt gratitude, which the converts uttered to him who had become their spiritual father, and joined with them in the worship of God, and in commemorating the wonders of a Saviour's love ! How mean and grovelling are all the pleasures of sense and sin, when compared with those which this illustrious servant of Jesus enjoyed, while engaged in these labours of love ! He indeed went on his way rejoicing ; delivering, as he went, the message with which he was entrusted, and observing the happy effects which a cordial reception of it produced. And what though his term of life was short ! what though he was called to lay down his life for the sake of his

divine master! he lived much in a short space ; he accomplished a great work upon the earth ; his memory will be embalmed in the hearts of the Christian islanders of the South Sea, and of their children's children. But had he continued a stranger to the power of the gospel, had he persisted in his habits of Sabbath profanation, there would have been no such name emblazoned in the annals of the Christian church as that of Williams, the eminently devoted and successful missionary Williams,—there would have been no once-savage pagans in the remote isles of the sea to shed a flood of tears over his early grave.

And may I not also allude to another name ? the name of one, who alas ! is now also numbered with the dead, a name which will go down to posterity encircled with the brightest halo of glory, the name of Thomas Chalmers. And oh ! with what a splendid career of Christian benevolence, and Christian patriotism, is that name now associated ! It is, however, to the great change which took place in his views of divine truth at an early period of his ministry, that we are principally to ascribe that course of study and of action, by which he ascended to so lofty an eminence, and acquired, to so unparalleled an extent, the esteem and affection of his countrymen. Possessed of natural talents of the very highest order, there is no doubt he would have obtained celebrity as a mathematician, or a chemist, or a writer on political economy. But it was when the glorious gospel of the blessed God burst upon him in all its grandeur, and in all its marvellous adaption to the wants and necessities

of a fallen being, that he began to enjoy true happiness, and that he resolved to consecrate all the high endowments of his richly gifted mind to that sublime object which he ever henceforth kept steadily in view, namely, the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. And it is from this period we are to date the commencement of those gigantic efforts, which he made for elevating the moral condition of his countrymen, and which have been attended with the most blessed results. With eloquence altogether unrivalled, with a splendour of illustration which threw a flood of light on every subject of which he treated, and with an intense earnestness of manner to which none could be insensible, he pleaded the cause which he now reckoned paramount and supreme. To see what he was accustomed to call a well conditioned population, well conditioned both as it respects this world and the next, was one of the most earnest desires of his heart, and one, for the accomplishment of which he was willing to spend and to be spent. Emphatically, and in the highest sense, he was the friend of the poor ; and to elevate them in the scale of intelligence, morality, and happiness, he employed all the powers of his lofty intellect, and all the persuasive influence which he could exert over the minds of those whom he addressed. With an intensity of ardour, and an enthusiasm of benevolence peculiar to himself, he prosecuted this great work, amidst discouragements and opposition of the most harassing and trying nature. And though his success by no means equalled his sanguine expectations, yet he never desisted from his efforts for the

Christian good of the ignorant and the neglected. To penetrate into the dark, and filthy, and miserable closes and lanes of our large towns ; to gain the good will of their inhabitants, by looks and acts of kindness ; to persuade them to avail themselves of the means of religious instruction, which he had provided for them ; to plant churches and schools, and to institute savings' banks amongst them, were objects which he continued to prosecute till the very end of life. And there is good reason to hope, that the plans of improving the moral and economical state of our outcast population, devised by his sagacious and benevolent mind, will yet be carried into extensive operation, and that those scenes of debasement and wretchedness, which are now, alas ! so awfully common among us, will no more be witnessed. What an interesting and delightful spectacle to behold this eminently great and good man, continually occupied with some well-considered scheme for raising the condition of the victims of poverty and vice ; and what a pure and noble satisfaction must he himself have enjoyed, while thus, like his divine Master, continually going about doing good ! What a blessing he has proved to the country, and to the world, when compared with some of his contemporaries, who, though like him, possessed of extraordinary powers of mind, have yet employed them only in literary or scientific pursuits, only in endeavours to extend their own fame, or to promote their own selfish interests. And what abundant reason have we to offer the most fervent thanksgiving to God, who called him by His grace, and disposed him to devote all the

high talents which He had conferred on him, to objects the most important and beneficent! Well may the Free Church of Scotland venerate the memory, and deplore the loss, of one to whom she is under the highest possible obligation ; of one who so eloquently pleaded her cause ; of one who placed himself at her head, when she felt herself bound to renounce all the temporal advantages which she derived from her connection with the state ; of one who contrived the admirable scheme now in active operation, for supporting her ministers, while carrying on the work of the Lord ; of one who so magnanimously cast in his lot with his brethren, and conferred on them, in their season of trial and anxiety, all the advantages which accrued to them from his brilliant talents, his honoured name, his unquenchable zeal, and his fervent piety ; of one whose surpassing excellence, all ranks and classes of society delight to acknowledge ; and of one, who in his works has raised for himself an imperishable monument of the loftiest mental endowments, employed in accomplishing the loftiest ends. But, by the grace of God, he was what he was ; and if you, my young friends, are partakers of that grace, you will also, in the sphere in which the great Head of the Church has been pleased to place you, devote yourselves to the advancement of His glory ; and though He may not have bestowed on you such high qualifications for doing him service, as on the persons whom we have mentioned, yet, if you occupy till He come, if you improve even the one talent with which He may have entrusted you, you will be accepted and honoured by

Him, who will call you to account only for what you have, and not for what you have not.

Have you begun a course of active usefulness in the world? I congratulate you on the noble choice which you have been inclined to make. You are walking in the same path which prophets, and apostles, and martyrs have trodden; in the same path which the faithful servants of Christ in every age have trodden, and in which He himself walked before them, while He sojourned here on earth; a path in which, while you are zealously endeavouring to promote the happiness of others, you will most effectually secure your own. And in order that you may not be weary in well doing, see that the divine life be maintained in full vigour in your souls. Let faith in the unseen realities of eternity, be in lively exercise; let the flame of devotion burn brightly within you; contemplate the example of those who have gone before you, and who, when themselves blessed of God, became blessings to others. Look forward to the termination of the period assigned to you here on earth; and think of the rapture with which you will be inspired, when you hear this sentence of divine approbation, "well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" and let all these considerations prompt you to be faithful unto death, that you may receive from the hands of the Lord a crown of life.

Eleventhly, and this leads me now, in the last place, to contemplate the young who fear the Lord at the approach of death. Your sun may go down while it

is yet noon ; disease may at a very early period seize you as its victim, and bring you to the verge of the grave. Death may receive a commission to remove you from this present world, even while you are in the bloom and vigour of youth. Jonathan, the generous and noble-minded Jonathan, was a young man when he fell in the field of battle, fighting against the Philistines. The good Josiah was in the very midst of his days when his life was brought to an end. John the Baptist, too, was but a young man when he was subjected to a violent death. Henry Martyn, too, was soon called away from the scene of his labours, and summoned into his Master's presence. But the time would fail to enumerate those who, while yet young, have bidden a final adieu to this earthly scene. And what though you also should early pass through the valley and shadow of death ! The Lord, whom you have feared, and honoured, and loved, and served, will be with you there, and with His rod and staff will comfort you. Though you are surrounded with every thing that can render life desirable—though you are connected with your fellow-creatures by many endearing ties, yet will He render you willing to depart, that you may be with Him, which is far better. Though nature may shrink from encountering the last enemy, yet grace will animate you for the conflict, and render you victorious. Though the most pleasing earthly prospects may have been opening up before you, you will be made willing to renounce them all, for the sake of that surpassing glory which is to be revealed in you. And oh ! what abundant cause will

you then have for thanksgiving to God, who disposed you early to fear Him, and to devote yourselves to His service! You are about to close your eyes on this earthly scene, your souls are about to appear before your Judge, and to enter upon an everlasting state. What can the riches of the world do for you now, though you possessed them in the greatest abundance? What can the pleasures of the world do for you now, though you had the means of enjoying them in the highest degree? What can the honours of the world do for you now, though you were exalted to the highest pinnacle of the temple of fame? Ah, how utterly worthless do they now appear; and how do you rejoice in the thought, that better riches are laid up for you, that purer pleasures are awaiting you, that more permanent and satisfying honours are about to be conferred on you! You have that faith, which gives reality in your minds to the things which are unseen and eternal. You are enabled, with holy composure and serenity of mind, to look forward to the time of your departure from a world of sin and sorrow, and of your entrance into an unchangeable and everlasting state. And though you are deeply sensible that by your sins you have forfeited the favour of God, and rendered yourselves liable to His overwhelming wrath, you believe that Jesus has endured the curse of the law, and fulfilled all righteousness in your room and stead; you receive, and rest upon Him for the salvation of your souls. And oh! how precious in your estimation is the blood which He shed on Calvary, how glorious the righteousness which He wrought out!

Relying on his finished work as the only ground of your hope, you enjoy a peace which passeth all understanding, and on the borders of an eternal world, you are enabled to say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou has redeemed me, Lord God of truth."

And oh! what scenes of splendour, and loveliness, and bliss, now burst upon your view! You have entered into the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God; you behold Him sitting upon His throne high and lifted up, and surrounded by countless myriads of adoring and happy spirits; you are welcomed into your Father's house by angels and spirits of just men made perfect; you are presented before the Majesty on high, by Him who has redeemed you by his blood; you survey with ineffable rapture the mansion which He has prepared for you; your love to your God and Saviour glows with the intensest ardour; you begin to sing the sublime hallelujahs of heaven; you contemplate the unveiled and ineffable glory of the King eternal, immortal, and invisible; you are favoured with the most transporting discoveries of His infinite excellence; and you look forward to an eternity to be spent in contemplating, adoring, serving, and enjoying the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. But eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. All this indescribable and inconceivable bliss, however, you are now to enjoy throughout all eternity; and through this never ending duration you will offer the most fervent thanks-

givings to God, who inclined you to fear him while you were yet young.

Contrast now with their glorious and happy condition, the life, the death, the final state of the young who walk in the way of their own heart, and after the sight of their own eyes. Their views are confined to this present world ; they are engrossed with its pursuits ; they are passionately fond of its amusements ; they are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; they avoid all serious reflection ; they shun the society of those who faithfully warn them of their danger ; they dislike the practical application of divine truth to the heart and to the conscience ; they neglect the worship of God ; they make no preparation for eternity. But in the midst of their thoughtlessness and folly, death often starts up before them, presenting a most frightful visage. They did not anticipate so early a visit from this king of terrors, and they tremble at the thought of meeting him. The prospect of appearing before God in judgment is awful in the extreme. What can they expect but His withering frown, but the sentence of everlasting banishment from His presence ? And must they go the way whence they shall not return ? Must they be removed in the very morning of life from that world in which they hoped to remain many years ? Must their bodies be committed to the grave, and their souls return to God who gave them ? How they shudder at the thought ! How earnestly they desire to be spared a little longer, yet a little longer ! But their appointed time on earth has come to an end, their accepted time, and the day of their salvation ;

and that most precious season has been wasted away and lost, irrecoverably and for ever lost. And for their misimprovement of precious privileges, for their neglect of the great salvation, their souls are now summoned to answer before the judgment seat of Christ. Ah, what a prospect is that which now presents itself to their view! How fearful a thing they now find it, to fall into the hands of the living God! But in his presence they must appear; from his lips they must hear their awful doom; and his wrath, his tremendous wrath, they must endure for ever, and ever, and ever.

And shall any of you, my young friends, be found at last among that wretched number? The Lord of his infinite mercy avert so overwhelming a calamity—a calamity that can never be repaired nor mitigated. The Lord grant that you may all be enrolled among that peculiarly favoured and honoured band, who have feared the Lord from their youth, and who have thus devoted the very best portion of life to His service and glory.

And now, my young friends, I have concluded this series of discourses, which were commenced with a special view towards the promotion of your best interests. And it is my earnest desire and prayer, that they be divinely blessed for this purpose. May the Lord incline you all to “remember your Creator in the days of your youth;” may you ever keep distinctly in view the grand end of your existence; may you be ever actively and zealously engaged in advancing the glory of God, and in doing good to your fellow men; may you be useful and honoured members of society,

and of the Christian Church ; may you enjoy, in an abundant measure, that happiness which true religion is capable of imparting ; may your path be that of the just, which, like the shining light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day ; may you be favoured with solid peace, and well founded hope in your last moments ; may you appear with rapturous joy before the great white throne ; and may your Pastor appear with you there, and offer the most fervent thanksgiving to God, that in so far at least as you are concerned, " he has not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." AMEN.



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